

Elizabeth M
Jan^{ry} 7. 37
D E A T H:

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V I S I O N;

OR, THE

Solemn Departure of Saints and Sinners,

REPRESENTED UNDER

THE SIMILITUDE OF A DREAM.

By JOHN MACGOWAN.

Heb. ii. 15. *And deliver them, who through fear of DEATH
were all their life-time subject to bondage.*

Rev. ii. 11. *He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second
DEATH.*

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for G. KEITH in Gracechurch-street; J. JOHNSON
and J. PAYNE in Pater-noster Row; and W. WATTS
on Windmill-hill, Moorfields.

M.DCC.LXVIII.

[Price One Shilling and Six Pence.]

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IT was about twelve Months ago that my mind, as is but too frequent with me, void of stability, rambled from one theme to another, and, for a considerable time, continued its vagary to that degree, that I found myself utterly incapable of fixing my attention on any subject that presented itself, however interesting and important it might seem. At last an awful subject, DEATH—all-conquering DEATH! presented itself to me, and that not in a very desirable form, but in all the deformities of an implacable enemy to nature. This unwelcome, though important subject, prevailed upon and ingrossed my attention in such a manner, that for a fortnight's space I maintained an almost constant intercourse with that awful production of sin; throughout the whole length of the day, whether I was in the closet, at the table, or taking a turn on the flowery banks of the Severn, my friendly neighbour, I was always employed in viewing the features of his awful countenance; marking, as well as I could, the proportion of

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his parts, and duly observing his formidable retinue. It was thus I employed myself, whilst the chearful Sun illumined our horizon, and nature rejoiced in his genial rays: not was I less intent on the awful subject, when silent night spread forth her sable curtains over the kingdom, and invited the labourer to refreshing rest: for either my eyes resisted the leaden influence of sleep, or the visiting slumber brought the thoughts of DEATH along with it. One particular instance of my nocturnal conversation with that universal Pillager, I esteem not unworthy of a public hearing, therefore shall do myself the pleasure of relating it.

It happened, one night, after I had been ruminating deeply through all the day, on that awful subject, that when I was in bed I could not compose myself for several hours to rest, but numbered the clock from eleven till two, so deep was the impression which the exercise of the day had left upon my mind: then it was that I began to feel the power of an alarmed imagination; for in one strain of thought I fancied that I beheld the dreaded monster approaching me with his opened commission in one hand, and a resistless dart in the other, with which he intended piercing my reluctant heart, and the hated grave close at his heels, yawning with eager desire for a prey. The man who knows the extent of his own fortitude, and the prowess of nature's arm, will not brand me with cowardice, though I tell him, that such a striking discovery made my timorous nature to shrink, and turn its back on the inflexible enemy:

Hard work, alas! to join the fray with death,
Unless defended from his baleful sting.

At another time I fancied that I saw the tyrant in the form of a dragon, wreathing his tremendous bulk beneath the
feet

feet of a glorious personage, who bore five ever flowing wounds which he received on the day that haughty death imagined the heavenly country was added to his earthly dominions. And indeed well might the insatiable tyrant conceive such a presumptuous thought, seeing, strange as it may seem, the Lord, the fountain of life himself, had fallen into his hands, nor did the regardless monster pay the least deference to his immaculate person. But well for man it was, that as the Saviour fell he seized the king of terrors in his most hideous form, and wrenched from him the fatal sting, the sad repository of his strength, and disabled him of the least hurtfulness to the chosen race. This holy Conqueror, for reasons known to himself, and profitable to us, was pleased to visit the dwellings of the dead, and, for a season, submitted himself to the arrest of death; but the third blest morning come, he shook the dust from him, burst the barriers of the tomb, forsook the confines of death, and in holy triumph held forth the poisonous sting, and said, *I have overcome death, and him that had the power of death.* When I was indulged with such a mental vision as this, I thought that emboldened nature collected its force and advanced to gaze on the expiring monster. O! thought I, if I could always view that cruel adversary, in his stingsless condition, sprawling at the feet of his wondrous conqueror, I could meet him with as little fear, as a child would sport himself with a harmless lamb. As I was meditating on these awful subjects, gentle slumbers seized me with their lulling charms, and soon wafted me into the arms of downy sleep, where I lay the rest of the night inactive in body, DEATH having imprinted his image upon me.

IN the mean while, the more vigilant mind, after her usual manner, rambled abroad through unmeasured space.

Mounted on agil fancy, she soon explored the vast meridian from pole to pole; then changing her course, she winged her flight across the countries, from the eastern depth to the occidental shore, and in its rapid journey my fruitful fancy lined out a numerous train of visionary objects; so that now I had work enough cut out for the residue of the night, in turning over these phantoms of the mind.

I DREAMED, that in one place I beheld the most beautiful garden that ever I had seen, represented by any type or print, whatsoever, and which I presume could be equalled only by Eden in its original beauty. In the midst of this delightful garden arose a fountain, not of water, but of a slimy substance, bearing something of the resemblance of boiling pitch. I thought that the fountain flowed apace, and sent forth innumerable streams to every quarter of the globe, and that in such plenty, that it diffused itself abroad through every corner of the land, insomuch that every inhabitant was less or more bedaubed with the polluting matter. Gentlemen in scarlet and lace, ladies adorned with silver and gold brocades; I beheld smeared with the filth of the fountain: from the high possessor of the royal chair, down to the despised Lazar, all were polluted, though many of them perceived not the stain. Many of those streams joining in one, composed a river of a prodigious force, which passed through a spacious plain, and multitudes of people of both sexes, high and low, rich and poor, of all denominations and persuasions, young and old, I saw rolling in the polluted stream. Some swimming, others wading; some faster, others slower down the noisome channel; some sipping, others lapping the foam of the unnatural billows, but all going along with the stream, which I perceived disembogued itself on the other side of this world, in a lake which
burneth

burneth with fire and brimstone, where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched.

IN another place I saw an infinite number of people, old and young, rich and poor, some decked with ornamental embroideries, rich brocades, delightful damasks, &c. others *hardly* covered with deforming rags; some with their coaches, landaus, &c. attended with a numerous retinue; some on horseback following a pack of hounds, others running on foot, but all pursuing the same chace. This promiscuous body, as I thought, formed itself into a circle of a wide diameter, around the mouth of a dreadful volcano. Every member of the mixed multitude held an uninterrupted pursuit around the ring. Those who rode in coaches, chariots, and landaus went foremost in the mad procession; those who strode the martial horse were next unto them; and the poorer sort, who tramped it on foot, hied after as fast as they could. When I beheld the ardour of the croud, I could not help admiring what valuable prize it might be, which prompted them to run with such alacrity, and that even within the views of danger; but at last I espied what are commonly called the pleasures of life transformed into immaterial butterflies, a cloud of which cut their uneven flight around the above-named circle, and danced as wantons within a very small distance of the first rank of the pursuers; and many of them, as straggling flies, mixed themselves with the various ranks of the rag-end of the multitude; and all the croud, as I thought, were intent on catching the giddy flies, ever hoping and ever disappointed.

SOMETIMES the pursuers got within arms-length of the leading flies, then they snatched with eager grasp, nothing

doubting but the long-sought prize at last was won. But, O the power of deceit! as soon as the enthusiast opened his hand, he saw with grief that the fly had eluded his diligence, however often it wantoned near him. Thus disappointed, they doubled their diligence, and increased their speed, in order to accomplish the desired end; but this, notwithstanding all their diligence, I perceived to be impracticable; for although the butterflies always kept in view, so subtle were they, they never could be caught; and yet so alluring was their wanton dance, that the mad pursuers, prompt with hope of attaining, could not be prevailed with to desert the chace, although at every turn one or more of the company tumbled into the pit, from whom there is no redemption. But as the volcano in the center received those whose race was run, others from the outside joined the ranks, and filled up the place of the persons lost. And thus it was at every turn, for they were always drawing nearer and nearer to the pit, and thus they continued as long as I beheld them.

In a third place, I saw in a spacious field, a prodigious number of people, mostly old, or middle-aged, extremely busy, and working upon their hands and knees, for whom I was touched with the tenderest emotions of pity, looking on them to be in a state of the most abject slavery, but could not for a time comprehend the nature of their servitude, being altogether unacquainted with so strange a sort of toil. Their actions seemed much to resemble those of a mole, for though hands and feet, and every other organ, were closely employed, their *heads*, their *plodding heads*, were principally concerned in the work; and what before I took to be such servile drudgery, I soon learned to be their chief, if not their only pleasure. O! with what alacrity did they
rout

rout with their heads, mole-like, in the earth in quest of somewhat, but what it was I could not at first comprehend, till after lending a close attention for some time to their motions, I perceived them to pick from the dust amongst which they routed certain particles of yellow dust, with somewhat of a brilliant gloss; and as soon as they found any of these, they kissed them, and hid them in a cavern very near the heart; and many of those diligent gentry I saw fall prostrate before the refulgent heap, and thus address it: "GOLD! adorable gold! GOLD, thou blessed effect of *mine own industry*, be thou ever preserved safe in my possession, and I desire no other good, no other blessing but thee. Increase, O increase upon me! for thou answerest all things, and I can be happy only in the possession of thee. Avaunt every pilfering rogue; ye poor and needy keep for ever at a distance from my dwelling, and reap the reward of your slothfulness. And, O my GOLD! continue to rest in these blessed coffers, blessed only by thy presence. Cease thy roving, and ever here take up thy abidance, and here I vow, that my morning homage, and evening adoration, shall be paid to none but thee." I saw, as I thought, some of them rout a whole summer's day, and prove very unsuccessful, finding few or none of those adored particles of dust; others were more successful, and at every time they dived into the earth, they brought forth some less, others more of the fulgent *clay*, and disposed of it so as to endue it with a generative quality, so that it annually begat, and brought forth more of its own species. Others I saw who routed long and fore, but no increase ensuing they fell into a visible discontent, and cursed the partial earth, which bestowed her favours on others, as they thought, less worthy than themselves. Some there were who toiled long, and were very successful in the *routing* way, having

heaped much of that precious dust together ; but to their lasting mortification, some cunning neighbour, by a most masterly artifice, got beyond and robbed them of the adored metal. Others diligently routed both night and day in the earth, and with the utmost care disposed of their increase in some place of approved safety ; but in despite of all their industry, they were mortified to the last degree, when they perceived that their own children, who played about their knees, and whom they loved above all things, *next* to their gold, were more dextrous in scattering the heaps abroad than they themselves were in collecting of them. Likewise some were there, who by long and incessant fatigue, had the pleasure of gathering much of this yellow dust together, but ere they were aware, whilst standing in an adoring posture before it, suddenly sunk into the earth, and I saw them no more ; but where they went to take up their future abidance I do not at present determine, only this I saw, their memory was soon forgotten, and the next heir reaped the fruit of their industry. Others there were who with indefatigable diligence had got *almost enough* of this brilliant dust, but ere the fool considered that it was perishable, he had the unspeakable grief of seeing it all swept away by some shower, or burned up by some flash of lightning, sent on purpose by the angry heavens ; on which disaster some of them became quite disconsolate, and went mourning even to the grave. Others, of more heroic fortitude, having sustained loss, immediately clapped down on their hands and knees, and went to work with their head in the earth, and routed therein with double diligence, resolving by all means, just or unjust, to repair their ruined heaps. Having had a full view of this routing brotherhood, I could not forbear thinking that a people so very near resembling

sembling the *mole* in its dispositions and actions, might, with a good deal of propriety, be named HUMAN MOLES.

BUT tired with beholding the paultry actions of this groveling society, I thought I bent my course to another domain, where I saw a lofty tower, the top of which transcended the hoary clouds, for aught I know, as far as they are higher than the earth, perhaps many times as far. The tower was built in a pyramidical form, divided into great variety of stories, with a kind of winding way on the outside, which led from one story to another; and you must think that a very dangerous way it seemed, seeing it had no battlements to guard its ascendants. On every story were built certain pinnacles, or small towers, beautifully adorned with garlands of flowers, plumes of feathers, titles of state, names of honour, &c. and on the top of the tower was a figure of clay, overlaid with the appearance of gold. This image was formed in the shape of a woman, beautiful at first sight, but whose features continue to appear the grosser the longer you look at her. She seemed to be crowned with gold, adorned with sparkling diamonds, and a zone studded with precious stones begirt her swelling loins; over her head was raised an azure canopy, embroidered with the finest gold. In one hand she held titles and names, in the other a regal sceptre, and in an inviting posture, she stood on a marble pedestal, and this alluring motto was wrote on her escutcheon. *The valiant hero who hath courage enough to climb up to me, shall enjoy me.* O what bustle was here amongst people of all ranks, striving who should soonest ascend the sides of the tower, each striving to possess himself of some place of eminence, without considering the dangers to which they were exposed by their aspiration! Often have I seen the contention of the

tuff, but never did I see such jockeying as was here; hardly any thing but jostling and crossing the way was to be seen amongst them; when one was ascended a few steps above the vulgar level, and fancied himself secure of a place of eminence, another prompted thereunto by envy, or some other principle equally vicious, came up to him, tripped up his heels, and precipitated him into the mote which surrounded the tower: for it ought to be observed, that this tower was surrounded by a horrible puddle, into which many of those who sought to ascend, were plunged with violence before they knew themselves to be in danger, either by the jockeying of their opponents, or even when seated upon the long-desired pinnacle, by some eddy gust bursting from the bosom of the tower, and precipitating them lower than they had been before. However, some few there were, who with indefatigable diligence attained almost the top of the tower, and on the spiral point of the pinnacles they swaggered with waving arms, and in a contemptuous manner looked on the gazing croud who stood below, eager beyond measure to obtain a smile of their lordships: but herein I thought the croud were greatly disappointed; for no sooner were any of these gentry put in possession of a pinnacle, but instantly they drank of the obliuating waters of Lethe, and totally forgot the men upon whose shoulders they climbed to those seats of eminence. Nevertheless, so deeply infatuated were those who stood below, that they not only worshipped the grandeur which they themselves had put upon them, but stretched their expectation beyond imagination, of receiving some convincing proof of their gratitude. But former depressions utterly forgot, the worthy gentlemen dwelt in their secure pomp, till, in an unhappy hour, a rustling blast burst swiftly upon them, and furiously whirled them from their seats of honour.

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SOME two or three ascended even to the marble pedestal, where they sat adorned with plumes of feathers, but could hardly be seen of the populace below. One thing concerning them I could not but think remarkable; for sometimes they appeared like a lamb, then like a lion, or a bear, and if at any time the wind beat high upon them, they transformed themselves into a willow, and bended beneath the blast; otherwise into a stream, and thus they eluded the iron hand of danger; and when the storm was over, they appeared like themselves again; and the haughty madam looked down with a smile upon them.

BUT of all the multitude there was only one who sat immediately at her feet in a royal chair; and upon his head she rested her hand and owned him her darling son. This favourite was a blooming majestic youth, in whose countenance was to be seen wisdom and magnanimity written in legible characters; and with deportment altogether different from those who sat near him, he looked down with an air of affection to all the ranks below him.

BUT strange as it may seem, this worthy personage, notwithstanding his merit and elevated station, did not appear to be the most happy man in the world, for it was not difficult to see anxious cares, and perplexing fears, crawling as so many snakes around his chair. I thought then, that surely the higher a man is in station, he is the more emphatically wretched, unless he can hug the servile chain like the mutable sons of Proteus, or has learned to live above the caprice of fortune. I thought in my dream, that by what means soever any pinnacle threw its rider, or however dirty his fall might be, that no sooner was the place proclaimed empty, than numbers strove who should first vault

into

into it. Here I saw a curate aiming at a vicarage, a vicar at a bishopric, and a bishop striving for an archiepiscopal see. Here I saw a valet aspiring to the fine gentleman, a baronet aiming at an earldom, and a country squire coveting the direction of the nation. Here I also saw a private centinel aiming at a glorious halbert, a halberdeer at a captain's place, a captain earnestly suing for a regiment, and *Prude*, my lady's woman, affecting the name of *Madam*.—For my own part I thought, that when I saw the follies of mankind, I could not help wishing that they were again blessed with the right use of their reason.

At last, more stayed, I found myself in the middle of a spacious field, decorated with all the variety of nature, in bloom; the freshest-verdancy, was the velvet-like ground work, embroidered with a richer variety of perfect colours than ever the delicate pencil of Apelles left on the stained canvas. I walked along admiring its beauties, ravished with the fragrancy of the full-blown flowers, which as oriental gems richly decorated the enamelled plain. I attended occasionally to the tuneful lark, as she chanted her morning anthem to her Almighty preserver; anon, my ravished ear received the melody from the warbling throats of the black-bird and thrush. Pleased to see and hear the spangled field join in concert with the feathered songsters, who sent forth their chirping melody from the flowery hedges; the one cheerfully singing, the other sweetly smiling, the great Creator's praise: O man, said I, Lord of this lower creation, what blessings dost thou enjoy beyond the most extensive privileges of all thy neighbours, the inhabitants of air, earth, and water! Conscience, reason, and understanding, an erect posture of body, sole dominion over all the numberless ranks of creatures, animate and inanimate, which pos-

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fects this earthly globe, or the expansive sea; they are all thine by divine donation, they all were made for thee: such are thine invaluable privileges, joined with an ever-during existence, and a capacity fitted for the enjoyment of an INFINITE GOOD?

THESE are blessings peculiar to the state of favoured man, and for which only depraved man are capable of being unthankful. But oh! let humanity blush at the awful consideration; notwithstanding all our enjoyments, we, only we men, are idle, when universal nature joineth in general concert to speak the great Creator's praise. Ingrateful man! shall the sun, the moon and stars, with all the hosts of heaven, unceasing move in general concord, and harmoniously shew forth the praises of God? Must the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and all the inhabitants of the waters, animate and inanimate, be concerned in the enhancement of his manifest glories, and thou, above all others most beloved, and most indulged, alone remain dumb in the general concert; worse than dumb, even refractory? Ungrateful man! what will become of thee when the God of equity requires thy soul, and thou standest trembling before his impartial throne?

I THOUGHT in my dream, that as I was thus ruminating; I was greatly surprized, by seeing the monster DEATH enter into the field, through a breach which Sin had made in its fences. He appeared at first in form of a skeleton, with quiver and darts, as he is usually drawn—The most barbarous rage and inflexible cruelty sat brooding over his hollow eyes, whilst his unseemly fingers eagerly grasped the irresistible scythe: the mattock and spade, wrought in a field of corruption, with the resemblance of empty shades
frisking

frisking over it, was the skeleton's flag; close behind him, almost treading on his heels, followed a lean, ill-looking figure, with extended jaws; at the sight of which my blood chilled in my veins, and my flesh shuddered on my bones with perfect aversion: nor was this aversion peculiar to me, for I perceived that all nature seemed to fly from its presence; and, indeed, well might nature tremble at the thoughts of an encounter, for the same hunger-bitten follower of DEATH cast a languishing look on every object, and yawned with desire to devour it.

I THOUGHT that DEATH was no sooner entered the field, than this meagre and greedy attendant addressed herself to him, in a craving manner, saying—Give—Give—on which the cruel skeleton brandished his *shafts*, and fiercely threw from his unerring hand first at one, then at another object, till whole nations fell almost at once beneath his fatal javelin: and one instance in particular I saw, of a whole generation being swept away by one stroke of his scythe. Such was the amazing power that he had obtained from complicated Sin, that all, especially mankind, fell at the first touch of the destructive dart; and as soon as fallen, this detested monster licked them up, and the world saw them no more. Here I saw this grand *devourer* made no distinction, betwixt this and that, but fed with as much delight on the flesh of a *beggar*, as on that of *princes* and *nobles*; the celebrated *beauty*, and the *youthful hero*, seemed to afford no greater relish to the hungry grave, than the country *landlady* or *rustic swain*; old and young, *beautiful* and *unseemly*, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, were confusedly jumbled together in its insatiable womb.

At a very small distance from this king of terrors, followed a tall upright personage, of the exactest symmetry in all her parts; her mien was noble, and all her gesture uniform. This royal and majestic personage, I thought, sat upon a seat of *right judgment*, and held a pair of *equal balances* in her hand, and had for her motto, *I judge according to every man's works*; I thought that this upright lady, who was in herself the most perfect beauty, invested DEATH with dreadful array, and equipped him in the most of his terrors; as every human creature who fell a prey to the Ravager, was immediately weighed in her impartial balances.

LAST of all, in the train of the skeleton, followed a monster of devilish birth, and of such a form as I had never seen before; it kept its eye, as I thought, continually fixed on the upright lady, whose name was JUSTICE, making inquisition for blood; and to this monster was given every person whose actions did not weigh according to the rules of the sanctuary, and they were all stored in its incorrupting bowels. And what was very strange, notwithstanding all the persons who were given to this insatiable monster remained entire within it, it continued as solicitous for more as it was the first moment of its being. Then I thought of that saying, DEATH and HELL are never satisfied.

I stood a considerable time admiring the strangeness of the show, and soon I began to discover something more; for DEATH metamorphosed himself into a dragon of an enormous size, and approached near to the place where I had took my standing for observation: fearful lest I should be the prey at which he aimed, I began to think of methods of resistance, as I could not reconcile myself to the thoughts
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of the *grave* ; nor was I certified at that time, that I should escape *hell* if he seized me. Up he came within a very little distance of me, which greatly roused my apprehensions of danger ; but to my unspeakable joy he turned off to the left, followed by his dreadful retinue, and turning my eye to that side of the field, I soon discovered the prey at which he aimed. A beauteous lady in all the grandeur of life, decked with the richest silks, adorned with gold, pearl, and precious stones ; attended by a numerous train of obedient servants, and she herself glistened like a goddess in the midst of them : every attendant carefully observed the glance of her eye, the wave of her hand, or the nod of her head, having learned by those to read her ladyship's pleasure.

AT first I was much amazed to see this jovial company altogether unapprehensive of danger, as none of them seemed to regard the monster's approach, but maintained their jollity with as much delight as if DEATH had never been born. Touched with pity, I thought I waved my hand to awake their attention, and intreated them to beware of yonder dragon ; but at that instant I beheld a kind of God, who is said to be president over this world, to raise a dust, and spread a mist before their eyes, so that they could not discern the paths of the Destroyer ; therefore they rejected my admonitions, mocked at my fervor, and bid me be gone for a prating fool. But seeing their imminent danger, and being moved with concern for them, I disregarded their clamorous speeches, hardened my countenance against shame, and lift up my voice higher and higher, using many arguments to persuade them that the monster DEATH was even then at hand to devour one or more of them : but all in vain ! for they would receive none of my admonitions, and mocked at my zealous concern. At last, unhappy moment !

ment! the inexorable tyrant came up with them, and with his forked talons seized my lady in the midst of her jocularity. But O how it would have shocked you to see the consternation she was in, when she first perceived herself envenomed by his poisonous sting; for then she was convinced that he aimed at her life, and was unwilling to the last degree to venture into the immaterial world, so much unknown to the best of men, and the DREAD of those who are ignorant of God! If gold and silver could have redeemed her from DEATH, she would freely have given as much as would have built a *cathedral*, parted with all her attendants and finery, and lived in adversity the residue of her days; or if she might have been exempted from the dreadful encounter, she would even have given up the beloved pleasures of plays, operas, and dancing assemblies. But alas! no bribe, nor promise of future amendment, could turn aside the relentless arrow, or procure the once gay delinquent the shortest reprieve.

SHE implored the aid of her skilful physician, attended by her faithful apothecary; yea, a whole troop of the faculty were summoned to exercise all their wisdom, by any means to resist the rapacity of the inexorable *tyrant*; but all in vain: for sad experience proved that no medicine, however skilfully prepared, is a sufficient antidote against the poison of DEATH's cankered sting; therefore the lady, however reluctant, was forced to submit to the superior power of the *monarch of terrors*.

HAVING had a full view of all that past betwixt DEATH and the lady, I could not forbear reflecting on the folly of inconsiderate mortals, who are every hour, for aught they know, exposed to death; and yet live altogether strangers

to a certain, an approaching eternity; nor suffer the least thought of futurity to dwell upon their mind, but assiduously bury every serious reflection in the moat of sensuality; rushing from one prophane delight to another, till unwelcome DEATH puts an end to their career, and serves them as he did the unhappy lady. O what profit is there, said I, in separating less or more time every day for intimate fellowship with death! In all probability, when grace is given so to do, our conflict with that merciless tyrant is far from being so terribly dreadful. It is true, I profess but a very small acquaintance with men and things; yet I cannot but conjecture, that one reason why this lady and her acquaintance so utterly detested discourses concerning DEATH, might be, because such discourses have a natural tendency to strip the fantastic pleasures of the flesh of all their imaginary charms. Then said I again, O blessed, discriminately blessed of the Lord are they, whose exalted pleasures can consist with the most intimate acquaintance and fellowship with DEATH! Those, and only those are fit to enter the lists with that formidable enemy to nature, who can in life maintain converse with him without spoiling the pleasure of the day.

I THOUGHT in my dream, that DEATH having finished his business with *madam*, he transformed himself from the appearance of a *dragon* into the likeness of a grave and not uncomely personage, cloathed in a long flowing white robe, which hid all his native deformities. Thus equipped he directed his course towards me, which once again put me in a panic, lest I should be the destined prey, notwithstanding he was not now so terrible as before; but as the all-directing Power ordained it, he passed close by me, his rout lying now to the right. My attention being wholly engrossed

engrossed by the achievements of that terrible hero, I turned my eye after him, and at no great distance I beheld a man of a middle age and upright mien, to whom he marched with all possible speed. No sooner was this good man apprised of his approach, than with a becoming serenity of countenance he went forth to meet him, and thus addressed him, *Come in thou blessed of the Lord, for I long to be dissolved, that my better part may appear in the more immediate presence of thy Conqueror*: to whom I thought DEATH replied, *Thou guarded one, I have no more to do with thee, but to sign thy dismissal from this stage of action, and open thy passage to the land of immortal felicity*; he said, and instantly pierced his heart, with an arrow dipped in the blood of Immanuel; and no sooner did the venerable man feel the arrow rankling in his bosom, than in holy triumph he cried out, O DEATH, where is thy sting! and where thy victory, O desired grave! Thanks, eternal thanks be ascribed to God, who hath given me, even me, worthless as I am, the victory through my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Is this DEATH? said I: DEATH, who of late was so cruel, when he had to deal with a person of a different turn of mind; call him no more the *monarch of terrors*! Yes, I will still give him that name, for it is essential to his very nature; if he at any time, to any one, is propitious and gentle, impute it not to any compassion in him, but to the blood, the precious, the atoning blood of the Redeemer; that blood, whose attractive virtue has drawn the poison even from the king of terrors, malignant to all, save those whose hearts and consciences by the divine spirit are sprinkled therewith,

HOWEVER, I could not help thinking, that there was something in the case of this good man, as remarkably desirable as that of the lady was dreadful ; and I could then say with Balaam, I trust from a better spirit, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and my latter end be like his.*

DEATH having released from the clayey tabernacle the waiting spirit of this sanctified disciple, I thought he changed himself a second time into the appearance of a *dragon*, whetted his sting, and invested himself with all his formidable terrors ; in which equipment, he bended his speedy course towards a magnificent palace, which stood at some distance on this delightful plain. With timorous heart, and careful steps, I followed as near as I durst, and watched with curious eye, to see what the next execution would be. On this occasion, there happened to be what is commonly called a ball, or dancing assembly, in the palace, from amongst whom every serious thought was banished ; and in the midst of their jollity, invisible DEATH stole amongst, and grinned ghastly upon them ; but heedless of their enemy, they persevered in their jocularities till the tyrant cruelly pierced the heart of two of them, where the injected venom rankled, so as to prevent their enjoying a future *merry meeting*. I trembled with fear lest the rest of the company should be taken ; but afterwards understood that DEATH, rapacious as he is, always narrowly mindeth the contents of his commission, without which he never appears on our mundane coast ; but carries it along with him wheresoever he goes, and never seizeth any one, but those whose names and places of abode are specified therein ; so that he is liable to no mistake, as he is falsely charged with in the case of the two *Ireneus's*.

ONE thing I thought not a little diverting, concerning some people whom I heard crying out for DEATH, saying, where is propitious DEATH? O that I knew where I could find him! but as soon as the terrible *skeleton* presented himself, they fled for refuge to the *doctor's embrace*. Others really amazed me, for they hunted through the field in a silent pursuit of DEATH, and as soon as they beheld him, plunged themselves into his devouring jaws.

MANY such instances I saw, but must at present forbear relating them, lest the length of my dream should give occasion to people of a censorious spirit, to charge me with over-sleeping my time: but what I saw filled me with uncommon concern for my fellow creatures, who are under the arrest of DEATH before they are aware——hurried off from the stage of action, before they well know themselves to be mortal. Grieved to see the thoughtless stupidity of blinded mortals, and the unretarded havock made of them by merciless DEATH, I cried out in bitterness of soul, *O that they were wise and understood this! O that they could consider the nature of their latter end!*

As I was thus breathing forth desires after the happiness of my contemporaries, a venerable personage approached and accosted me thus: *Young man, I perceive that the visible destruction brought upon mankind, hath filled your heart with honest concern; you mourn to them, but they will not lament; you pipe unto them, but they will not dance; rather, for your pains, they will laugh you to scorn, and bait you under the ridiculous name of Fanatic; mankind prone to sensual pleasures, and enslaved to fleshly lusts, will not, cannot hear your serious admonitions: but if you please to go along with me, I will shew you something of the various forms of death,*

as it is met with by saints and sinners ; which discovery, if sanctified, may be of great advantage to you all the days of your life.

BEING naturally of an inquisitive mind, I readily embraced the offered favour, gratefully thanked the gentleman, and pleased myself with hopes of seeing much of the monster DEATH, with whom I expected, ere long, in cruel conflict to encounter. But, dear sir, said I, before we depart from hence, let me beg to be acquainted with the story of yonder lady, who was so rudely served by the *merciless* TYRANT. The lady, said he, after whom you inquire, was named *Teresa*, the only daughter of a wealthy gentleman and lady in the neighbourhood ; she was blessed with a person peculiarly elegant and pleasing ; her countenance displayed the most agreeable softness, and her snowy skin even vied with the feathers of the swan for whiteness ; her shape was faultless in the eye of the most discerning, every part being finished with the most perfect symmetry.

THUS accomplished, she was taught from her cradle to value her beauty and gentility, and her fond and foolish parents soothed her vanity by all that their dotage could contrive ; no care nor expence was thought too much to render her education perfectly polite, and to set off the graces of her frame to the best advantage ; but little or no care was taken to improve the infinitely more valuable soul.

HER taste for dress was so remarkably elegant, her manner of dancing so particularly genteel ; such was her great
excellency

excellency at cards, and so singularly happy was she in devising schemes and forming parties of pleasure, that she became the most celebrated toast of the day. Thus she lived, ravished with false pleasures, and dead to every serious and divine principle, till DEATH seized her unawares, and hurried her off from all her delights into a dreadful and unthought-of eternity, where we leave her in a state for ever *unalterable*, and go over to yonder building, to see what may be learned there.

THIS said, he conducted me through the spacious meadow, towards a magnificent building of the most curious architecture, which was erected on four rows of columns, partly of the Corinthian and partly of the Ionian order, in one corner of the enamelled plain; and here, without any formality, we entered, my guide leading the way. It was now he was pleased to take me by the hand, and lead me into a chamber where were several people of both sexes attending a sick man, who lay in dreadful distress on a bed of sorrow; he was low, and, to all appearance, very near the expiring moment, every one waited for the last convulsive throw. My guide having, by some wisdom peculiar to himself, rendered us both invisible, unperceived either by him or his attendants, we went up close to his bed-side; he started—he stared—and his eyes rolled most frightfully in his head, as if they had followed some terrible apparition, which suddenly traversed the room; then he was seized with convulsive agonies which distorted every one of his feeble organs. In this strange confusion of mind and awful distress of body, he vehemently struck with both hands and feet, as if environed with deathly enemies, from whom he desired an asylum of safety, and with an eye san-

guine beyond imagination, he looked on those who attended at his bed-side, as if he would have said, *O that you could help me now in my last difficulties!*

I THOUGHT in my dream, that a neighbouring minister came in, with a design to assist the dying man in his last extremity; he prayed for, and would have conversed with him, but all to no purpose, for the distressed delinquent continued in growing anguish, and could hardly endure either his prayers or conversation; the mourning relations procured all the assistance which could be had from the faculty, by all possible means to prevent the success of the ghastly destroyer: but alas! his disease was beyond the power of physic to suppress, for his trembling heart was envenomed by death. Yet, still studious to contribute to his relief, they poured the tormenting physic into his wasted body; but, ah! how feeble are all our friendly efforts, when our unhappy acquaintance have to deal with DEATH! seeing the rage of the ravager is not to be repelled. I was deeply affected with this melancholy spectacle; his tender wife, and other dear relatives, stood round his bed, bedewing it with floods of tears; and his little children crying and sighing to each other, at intervals, in an adjacent room; I could not stand the mournful sight, without mingling my tears with theirs. My guide, perceiving the impression which the affecting scene had made upon me, rebuked my want of resolution, being so much depressed before the one half of the scene was unfolded; and I, sensible of my defect, submissively yielded to the reproof of my wise superior. I thought that, pleased with my submission, he opened a box of invaluable ointment, and therewith anointed my eyes, whereby they were

so much strengthened, that I could then readily see things which in themselves are altogether invisible to the unassisted natural eye. Then it was that I soon perceived that those convulsive pangs, distorted features, rolling eyes, wild and distracted looks, &c. were not merely the effects of nature struggling with the growing disease, but proceeded mostly from a *mental* cause. A fearful avenue was opened before him, leading into a dreaded ETERNITY, at the not far distant end of which avenue he beheld the tremendous reward of all his ungodliness : this, this it was which caused such perturbation in his distracted mind ; this it was which made death so terribly dreadful to him ; and this it is which affecteth my mind now, when I relate the story.

NATURE, utterly reluctant to be dissolved, exerted her strongest powers, and made her utmost efforts to preserve the union betwixt soul and body inviolate. The alarmed soul, having such an undesirable prospect before her, shrunk down into the lowest caverns of the heart, as it were to hide herself from the researches of DEATH, which she saw approaching to dislodge her, and joined issue with shocked nature, to repel the power of the fierce destroyer. But soon, very soon, enfeebled nature, having exhausted her strength, swooned into helpless inactivity ; then the frightened soul, finding herself deserted by her weak ally, seemed half persuaded to yield the debate. Then she quitted her interior lurking places, and, quaking as she passed through the lanes of life, ascended to the pale quivering lips, where she sat astonished at the dire event. I thought then of the propriety of those verses of the celebrated Dr. Watts :

“ Death !

" Death ! 'tis a melancholy day
 " To those that have no God,
 " When the poor soul is forc'd away,
 " To seek her last abode ;
 " In vain to heav'n she lifts her eyes,
 " But guilt, a heavy chain,
 " Still drags her downward from the skies,
 " To darkness, fire, and pain."

Dread amazement seized her, when she beheld lurking in the chamber a train of ghastly furies waiting to carry her away ; precipitately back she fled, resumed her possession of the interior regions, roused up the residue of nature, fled to every avenue, and wildly shrieked for help ; but all in vain her unequal resistance : for DEATH, like a stanch murderer, stood firm to his purpose, and closely pursued her through all the lanes of life ; at last the fatal moment comes, vanquished nature lays down her arms, the weary heart forbears to throb, and DEATH displays the trophies of victory all around.

DEATH having broke through all the redoubts of desolated nature, the dismayed ghost, now forced forth from her wonted dwelling, remained in a defenceless condition, exposed to the insults of merciless fiends, destitute of an asylum. Unhappy spectre ! as soon as she arrived at the pale portal of the lifeless lips, she began to seek for a place of refuge ; she looked up towards heaven, but dreadful was the prospect, for she beheld an incensed God loosing his engines, and beginning to play his flaming indignation upon her ; to shun this inevitable evil, she looked downward, but equally terrible was her prospect there ; with consummate horror she beheld the yawning jaws of interable

lerable hell extended wide to receive her. There being now no flying from the environing evils, the swift messengers of destruction seized, shouldered, and bore her away, to appear before the judgment-seat of injured and incensed justice, where she received the fearful, the irrevocable sentence, *Depart from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* But, oh ! no tongue can express, no heart can conceive, her struggles and shriekings, when she first felt the tormenting touch of the intolerable talons of hell ! her lamentations ascended even to the relentless throne of God.

I THOUGHT in my dream, that by this time I was, in my own apprehension, almost dead with surprize and fear ; but my benevolent guide imparted to me a cordial, in my esteem, infinitely more valuable than all the wealth of the Indies, by which I was much refreshed, and after some time I addressed him thus :

O, SIR, what have I heard ! what have I seen ! surely this man must have been some vile, notoriously wicked, and uncommon sinner, which makes his latter end so terrible.

To which the venerable gentleman replied ; You may be assured, young man, that the LORD's judgments are just, and that he condemns only in righteousness ; and if this man had not been a sinner, his final sentence had not been such as you have heard and seen. That he was a great sinner is certain, but that he was greater than others I will not affirm, as there is but too much reason to believe, that there are thousands in the world as wicked as he, who, if boundless mercy prevent not, will meet with the same condemnation with him.

THIS

THIS man, whose fate you so much deplore, was named *Contumacio*, a person ever addicted to rebellion : when young, he had the advantage of a religious education, which was no small aggravation to his future sins, as moral instructions were thereby early impressed on his mind. From hence he was constrained, however reluctant, to have some sense of what is in itself either morally good or morally evil, and was often subjected to the sting of an uneasy conscience, especially after any gross out-breaking in sin : those pangs of mind extorted from him many promises and strong resolutions of amendment, and oftentimes drove him to his knees in the closet, as well as to an attendance on public worship frequently on the sabbath-day.

You will not think it strange, I suppose, if I tell you, that by his occasional attendance on the word preached, together with his converse with religious people, he attained to a good degree of *speculative* knowledge both of the law and gospel ; this made him look on himself as a converted person, notwithstanding he possessed not one desire after the heart-cleansing power of the gospel ; but, amidst all his pretensions to religion, allowed himself in secret sin, and pretty often his sins were obvious even to beholders. As his religion was far from uniform, at some seasons neglecting the word preached, he associated himself with those whom he called *good companions*, and enjoyed the pleasures which flow from drinking and gaming ; and so long as conscience was mild, he laughed at the weakness and narrow-spiritedness of those who could not relish the pleasure which he enjoyed in his indulged liberties.

Thus

THUS it was with poor *Contumacio*, for the most part, when *health* and prosperity stretched their easy wings over his dwelling; for he seldom dealt in religion, except in a case of adversity, which though not often, yet he was sometimes visited with, as you shall hear.

IT was the Lord's pleasure to visit him on a certain time with a violent fit of sickness, attended with many symptoms of imminent danger, insomuch that he thought himself on the very brink of eternity; and the dreadful apprehensions of approaching DEATH impressed his mind with much sorrow for sin, and gave birth to some hopes, especially with the less intelligent of the godly, that the work might be real and saving, and that his affliction might prove a sanctified means of his conversion. But, alas! my friend, all their hopes were blasted ere they well began to blossom; for as his disease began to abate its violence, his convictions abated proportionably, till quite recovered from his bodily complaint, and then he was likewise relieved from the fever in his conscience.

THERE is an old saying, *Afflictions never fail to make a man either better or worse*, exactly verified in this unhappy person, for he increased daily in wickedness to that degree, that he laughed at every thing sacred: but one warning after another being disregarded, it pleased the Lord at last to leave him, to work iniquity with greediness. Thus it was that perverse *Contumacio* was hurried forward by his carnal acquaintance from one sin to another, till he hath brought himself to what you have seen.

THIS

THIS awful account of the unhappy *Contumacio* greatly affected me, and as I was deeply musing on what I had heard and seen, my venerable guide thus addressed me : *Come, now let us take a view of the friends of the deceased.* And now my attention was wholly engrossed with what passed amongst them, the most of whom were bathed in tears.

God rest his soul, says one, he was as good a natured man as ever lived. Ay, that he was, says a second, and as good a husband as any in the world, and minded that that was good too; though to be sure, poor man, he was not without his failings, but the best have their failings as well as he. Very true, says a third, God help us, we are all frail creatures; poor man, it is well for him that he has got safe out of this troublesome world; it is better for them that are dead than for them that are alive; for him, to be sure, he is the happiest of us all. Thus they reasoned, and occasionally threw in consultations in regard to the order of the funeral.

I TURNED to my guide with amazement on my countenance, and stared him full in the face, on which he stopped me short before I had time to speak, and thus it was that he addressed me.

THESE people have no notion at all of sin being punished after death; but whatever course of life a person has led whilst here on earth, they have not the least doubt of his admission into heaven when he dies. Hell might never have been made as a place of punishment, for any notion which they have of it. If you, or any other per-

fon, were to tell these people, that their departed friend has already taken up his eternal abode in those dismal, unfathomable depths, where the worm of conscience dieth not, and where the fire of unspeakable torment cannot be quenched, they would look on you as an uncharitable, hard-hearted wretch, unfit for the company of men in this world. And after all you have heard and seen, you will no doubt think it strange, that the minister who shall perform the funeral rites, should commit the body of this man under the name and character of *brother* to the dust, in a sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection with the just, notwithstanding he is for ever separated from them; and yet I can tell you, that such is the parson's charity, that he is likely enough to bury him in this form. To which I replied, Dear sir, where burial services are by law established, the instituters having but too much reason to believe, that the whole nation is not godly in all its members, it might be thought not at all unreasonable for some provision to be made for the burial of a *sinner*, as well as that of faints.

BUT, my benevolent friend, may it please you to inform me, whether any reason may be assigned why this man, although wicked, should be so troubled at his death, for I have somewhere read, that the wicked have no *bands* in their death, and are not troubled as other men? To which my guide replied, Yes, young man, you have so read, if you have read your Bible, for there it stands at large; but you may know, that poor *Contumacio* was thoroughly awakened to a sense of wrath on account of his sins, and they appeared to him worse than so many dreary ghosts, or hideous *spectres*, which made him, as you saw, so terribly alarmed, when the invincible *skeleton* approached,
and

and presented the point of his envenomed shaft. A world ! ten thousand worlds would he have given, could he for them have been told how to evade the fatal thrust. But the stroke not to be evaded he was obliged to sustain ; but oh ! may you never know such a latter end !

His great disorder of mind was partly owing to his being possessed of a larger degree of moral knowledge than many others, so that very many of his sins were committed against the light of his own conscience, which made them the more dreadful unto him ; but the chief reason is, God doth sometimes alarm the conscience of a departing sinner, that he may manifest his judgments for the convincing of some, and for the leaving of others without excuse : if you please, I would have you observe yonder woman, who sits pensive at the other end of the room ; perhaps her conversion is one end which the Lord proposed by his judgments manifested in this unhappy man ; and let me tell you, *Novitio*, that I am of opinion that she will never forget this awful providence whilst she herself is continued in being. Believe me, Jehovah's ways are in the deep waters, and by far more intricate than the paths of the whirlwind. The great, the sovereign Householder, hath an indisputable right, if he see meet, to burn his *wooden* vessels, that with their ashes he may brighten his vessels of *gold* and *silver*. Now you have seen this man, with his end, come along with me, and another scene shall be unfolded to you.

I THOUGHT in my dream, that, according to his directions, I followed my guide through diverse turnings, in this stately mansion, till we arrived in an apartment, where was an old gentleman, laid on a couch, dictating to an attorney,

attorney, who sat by him, writing his last will and testament. He signed, sealed, and delivered the deed, and then with the greatest vivacity proceeded to relate the various virtues of his life, seemingly extremely pleased with the recapitulation.

HE willed his children to follow his example ; and, [the better to encourage them to such an imitation, he told them, that it was but a small sum of money which he and their mother possessed at their first entrance on the marriage state ; and how, by their diligence and frugality, they had saved so and so, mentioning the legacies which he had bequeathed in his will ; adding, that if they were diligent and frugal, they might also, proportionably, increase that which, he blessed God, he had procured for them. He added farther ; “ My dear children, I am very ill, and doubt I cannot recover ; the doctor gives me but little hopes ; but it is what we must all come to, and you are all the witnesses of my conduct, ever since you were capable of discerning betwixt right and wrong. I have been just in all my dealings ; never imposed on any man, and now, God help me, I am dying ; none that ever I dealt with can say to me, *Thou didst me wrong, or thou hast cheated me in this or that.* This gives me a good deal of satisfaction in my present case. I thank God, I can now say, that I never swore an oath in my days, but have often been angry with that wicked practice in others. I never was drunk, but always detested that beastly and wasteful sin ; nor, as I remember, did I ever tell a lie ; but have always minded my duty to God, attended at church and sacrament duly ; and if ever I sinned at any time, I was careful to pray to God for mercy, was sorry for it, and confessed to God, who is merciful, and will I hope pardon the frailties which

we are all subject to. If at any time I sinned, it was not with a wicked design, for, I thank God, I have always had a good heart, and meant well in what I did; and it were a great sin to disbelieve in the mercy of God; and I hope, when I consider that I have always believed in Christ, been diligent in providing for my family, have carefully husbanded what I got by my business, and have been mindful of my duty to God, I have little reason to fear but it will be well with me; and now, as in all probability, I cannot recover, I have settled every thing, I hope, to your satisfaction, as well as my own, and can die in peace."—Thus it was that he instructed his children, in his latest hours, and some of them confirmed all that he said, by applauding the truth of every sentence. However, I thought all along, that I discerned a secret joy amongst the young people; notwithstanding, for decency's sake, they assumed several of the symptoms of grief; and was confirmed in my opinion, by overhearing the eldest son, when the father said, *In all probability I cannot recover*, to whisper secretly to himself, *I hope you cannot*; and when the old man said, he had settled every thing to his childrens satisfaction, the son whispered again, *Ay, if you would make quick work of dying*. I then thought how foolish it is in those parents who snatch at every opportunity of amassing wealth for their children, seeing that thereby they are so far from gaining their love and esteem, that they become impatient for their death, in order to be possessed of their substance.

IN the mean while the visitants of the old gentleman comforted him against the fears of death, by putting him often in mind of his life so well spent, which will, said they,

they, no doubt, make you a happy man, as soon as you are delivered from this afflicted body.

NOTWITHSTANDING I was greatly surpris'd at the ingratitude of young *Phylargirus* in wishing the death of his father, I could not help being well pleas'd with the disposition of the old gentleman's affairs; and, turning to my guide, with satisfaction visible on my countenance, I said,

AH, sir! what a happiness is it to be rich in good works! O with what pleasure may this man die, when he looks back, and takes a view of a life spent to such great advantage! How vast is the difference betwixt this and the other man's estate! the one went distracted to hell, but the other will doubtless go joyful to heaven the next moment after his dissolution.

To which my guide replied, I see, *Novitio*, you are too prone to judge according to outward appearance, not considering that appearance and reality are very often two different things; but wait with patience only a little while, and you shall see an end of *Avaro*, with all his happiness, though you so much admire it.

By this time I thought that the old *Avaro* declined apace, and ever-watchful DEATH, who attended on his bed, imposed a fatal weight on his labouring heart: a dark mist beclouded his heavy eyes, and a cold dew rested clammy on his forehead, so that every pulse was expected to beat a finis; but as there yet remained a few sands in the mortal end of his glass, he recovered a little, and, after some time, he said, I thought to have spoken no more; but I

have yet time to bid you farewell; farewell, my dear children; I must pay this debt to nature, but my peace is made with God, and I die comfortable. This said, his head declined, his eyes became fixed, and all the symptoms of immediate death were upon him.

It was now that my venerable guide bid me to mind well who were in the chamber with us; on which, lending a close attention, I beheld several ghastly furies, in all the deformities of *reprobation*, silently lurking round the bed of the sick man; but none of them offered to come near to disturb his peace. The good *Veratio*, my benevolent guide, perceiving that the discovery had struck me with horror, willed me not to be afraid, for, said he, they will all be very quiet till the old man's departure, and even then they will discover themselves to none but him.

You will easily believe, that I now began to change my opinion of *Avaro*, having seen who were his silent attendants. The moment of separation come, the beguiled soul took a kind farewell of the body, and came forth from the interior regions, smiling with hopes of the divine reward; and as soon as she ascended to the lifeless lips, she looked around to espy her tutelar angel; but dreadful was her astonishment when she perceived that there was no guardian there, to bear her thence in safety, but a train of relentless furies waiting to carry her to their dark abode! With infinite terror she turned about, and strove to regain her former possession; but now, alas! the gates of mortality were shut, and the body refused to admit its former tenant. The sly seducers, as so many merciless tigers, leaped upon and seized her in the midst of her horror and distraction. But O what heart can conceive, what pen can describe, the dreary distraction
of

of the dismayed spectre, when she found herself shackled by those cruel tormentors! A faint description thereof would make the stoutest heart to tremble, and the ruddiest countenance to gather blackness. The sly seducers, who attended him incognito during life, remained quiet as possible till the deceived ghost was safely dislodged, and then they assumed the devil in all his infernal forms and tyranny; seized, fettered, and bore her away, notwithstanding she resisted their fury with inexpressible struggles. O my soul! how dreadful must the disappointment of that man be at death, who in his life-time feeds himself upon the transient hope of an hypocrite, and builds his expectance of future happiness on a sandy foundation! Instead of being caressed in the bosom of everlasting love, he is enfolded in the arms of eternal despair; instead of partaking of the ineffable joys of the righteous at death, he is precipitately plunged into the gulph of never-ending anguish.

IT was now I began to understand the meaning of such sayings as these, *The hope of the hypocrite shall perish; they look for peace, but behold evil cometh, &c.*

ASTONISHED at the event, I turned hastily to my guide, and asked him how it should come to pass, that a man of so many good works should at last become a prey to devouring flames? Sir, said I, how is it? Can it possibly be consistent with the goodness and equity of God? To which the worthy gentleman meekly replied,

I TELL you, *Novitio*, you must not, from what you have seen, infer, that the ways of the Lord are unequal, and that he disposeth of his creatures unjustly. For all the good works which *Avare* boasted so much of, and depended upon

for his acceptance with God, were good *only* in shew; they proceeded not from a principle of living faith, and you are informed by the word of divine truth, that whatever is not of faith is sin. Nor had the blind *Avaro* the least regard to the glory of God in all or any of them, but they were all performed with a view to selfish ends; therefore, when they came to be viewed by the eye of *impartial justice*, they were all accounted as abominable deeds: for no act is acceptable to God, unless it spring from a living faith in Christ, and a principle of love to God. He had indeed some slight acquaintance with the external forms of religion, but was wholly a stranger to its heart-cleansing and world-over-coming power; but however clean he had made the out-side of the cup and platter, being inwardly full of ungodliness and error, he was unmeet for, and consequently could not possess a dwelling in, the holy of holies. *Avaro*, whilst alive, was one of those deceived people who esteem *gain to be godliness*; his whole life was spent to the end of getting; and, being successful therein, he valued himself far above others who were less successful, fondly alleging that all his increase was owing to his own industry; and if at any time he thought of divine Providence, he imagined that his worldly prosperity was an evidence of his enjoying the favour of the Almighty. As to his religion, he seldom omitted going to church twice on the Lord's-day, and, since he was old and unfit for business, once almost every day, by which he thought he merited greatly at the hand of God; and was the more confirmed in his opinion, inasmuch as some of his neighbours did not attend on public worship once in a month.

WHEN at any time he gave a small part of his substance to feed the hungry or clothe the naked, it was generally to
wipe

wipe away the score of sin from his conscience; otherwise to prevent his being thought a covetous person, for this was a scandal which he could not endure, but looked on his carefulness as an excellent virtue. Yea, so ignorant was he of the pure and spiritual law of God, that he expected to be rewarded for gathering together fortunes for his children. Whilst *Avaro* lived, there was none in the neighbourhood more successful than he; but however he succeeded in his former enterprizes, he is woefully disappointed in his death; for now the dye is cast, his loss is irrecoverable, and his afflictions are beyond a remedy. Believe me, young man, continued *Veratio*, all disappointments, losses, and crosses which can possibly happen in life, are infinitely rather to be chosen, than that disappointment which the successful pharisee meets with at death.

I WAS exceedingly shocked at the fearful deception of this wordling, rich in life, but poor in death; and in my confusion of mind I breathed forth some such desire as this, "Lord deliver from the subtle, insinuating love of the world, and stupid ignorance of thy holy ways!" My guide interrupting said, a suitable prayer; for the love of money is the root of all evil, springing from and ever attended with ignorance of the holy God; ingenious and wise was that heart that could suggest such a prayer, as *Lord, give me neither poverty nor riches, &c.* Which of your acquaintance, *Novitio*, think you, can heartily express such a prayer?

AVARO being stretched out a lifeless clayey corse, *Veratio* led me away to a third mansion in this stately fabric, where another distressing scene was unfolded. The unhappy *Securus*, a young man of about twenty-one years of age, was the possessor here; but his term, alas! appeared to be near an

end, being almost spent in a consumption; but unhappy youth, he could not bear to be told that he was a dying man. His relations and friends did what they could to prevent him having any thoughts of DEATH and a future state, by basely and sinfully flattering him with hopes of recovery, notwithstanding they evidently saw, that, without a miracle being wrought, his death was inevitable.

ONE told him that she knew a certain person who had been as bad, if not worse than *Securus* was then, but was now happily recovered, and was as well as ever; another advised to send for Mr. *Medicus*, a distant physician, who she said had performed wonders in curing consumptions; a third persuaded him that he looked better than formerly, and was likely to recover: but not one of them were faithful enough to put him in mind of approaching DEATH, and a *never-ending eternity*, which he was just ready to launch into, lest they should disturb the tranquillity of his mind.

GRIEVED in soul to hear them flatter the blinded wretch with hopes of life, even when they saw DEATH attending on every breath; I was about to have spoken, but my guide prevented, by telling me that his friends would look on me as bad as a murderer if I should disturb his Conscience, by asking him any pertinent questions relating to a future state. Is this a display of parental affection and brotherly friendship! said I. Miserable relations! Unprofitable and pernicious friends, whose very friendship is the most barbarous cruelty! Is it not enough that he hath lived a life of unintermitted rebellion against God, but you must study to get him out of the world insensible of it! Wretched ministers of false comfort are ye all! O my God, let me ever be preserved from the fatal influence of such soothing flattery!

This said, my guide addressed me in the following manner : This is young *Securus*, a thoughtless youth, accustomed to put the evil day afar from him, minding only the present time; for if it happened, as sometimes it did, that the thoughts of DEATH encroached on his mind, he lulled his Conscience to quietness, by promising to repent of his sins, and mend his ways hereafter, when he was old, and had enjoyed the pleasures of life, little thinking that he was to be cut off in the very bloom of his youth. *Securus* was one of those who pretend to be zealously affected for the church, but never come near its assemblies; and even now, in his latest hours, he has not the least thought of DEATH and eternity; but is angry with his physician, because he will prescribe no more medicines for him: still he hopes to prolong his life, notwithstanding his lungs are so far spent that he can hardly utter one half of a contracted sentence. In all appearance he will never think of DEATH and judgment, heaven and hell, joy and pain, till the flaming torments playing around him rouse his sleeping soul. Then, if not before, he will begin to think of eternity. At last he will be convinced, that the torments of hell are insupportable, and of never-ending duration, though he disregarded every threatening thereof denounced in the sacred oracles.

VAIN *Securus*, whilst in health and prosperity, laughed at the timidity of those who had any dread of offending a holy and terrible God; and accounted religion to be nothing else but whining hypocrisy; but ere long he will feel to his sorrow that the wrath of a sin-avenging God is indeed something to be afraid of, and that religion is real and not chimerical.

IN health he accounted the lives of the religious to be madness, and their latter end without honour. So he lived, and now his insolence, in basely contemning the ways and people of the Lord, hath issued in that stupefaction of mind, which ere long will terminate in intolerable anguish; then he will be fully convinced, that his supposed fools are the only wise ones on the face of the earth, and that their latter end is more honourable than that of all men besides,

THIS awful proof of degeneracy touched me so sensibly, that, as I thought, I uttered some such a lamentation as this.

O SIN! monstrous beyond all productions! Thou most abominable of every evil! Thou hast bereaved us of our native knowledge possessed in our creation state, diffused darkness through the whole understanding. Thou hast changed our ancient love into present hatred, and all our former holiness gives place to sinful insensibility. Can a man stand at the entrance of the grave, and there concert the schemes of earthly pleasure? Having his feet on the threshold in the gates of perdition, can he yet believe himself in a land of security and rest? Who could ever conceive, without ocular demonstration, that such blindness should overspread the mind of a rational being, as for him to look on his body as tenable even when in the chilling embraces of desolating DEATH? But so it is, through thy prevalency, thou most loathsome of every nature! By thee destruction overwhelms the human race, thou fertile source of innumerable evils! O let me for ever admire the discriminating grace of the great *Three in One*, who by the special influences of the divine spirit hath realized sin to me in all its hateful

ful deformities and dreadful consequences ; hath made my once stupified and benumbed Conscience feel a gentle touch of his fatherly anger on account of sin ; and hath, according to his own purpose and grace, been pleased to lead me for pardon and acceptance unto that precious blood, enriched with all the fulness of indwelling god-head ! O my soul, bless thou the Lord for a sense of sin ; for though it is painful it is also salutary. Let them not be accounted for thy companions, who deem a sense of sin to be superfluous in religion.

IT was now that I thought my guide *Veratio* interrupted me, just as the sin-hardened *Securus* departed this life ; and said, Thoughtless he lived, and thoughtless he died ; but now he is thoughtful enough. Believe me, *Novitio*, he hath already thought more of hell, sin, and rebellion, than ever he did in all his life. Look you, *Novitio*, to yonder lake of fire and brimstone, where he is already plunged, undergoing the unknown tortures of the second death. And now he hath a never-ending eternity before him, to think of what is past and what is future. Unhappy is he who is thoughtless in life, and unprovided for in death, like the wretched *Securus* ! A brilliant funeral is indeed designed him ; but, alas ! what pleasure can lifeless clay, or a tormented ghost, take in funeral pomp, or the crocodilian tears of the mercenary mourner ? But let us leave his relicts to endure that honour designed to be imposed upon them, and let you and I see what farther discoveries we are capable of making.

O, SIR, said I, what dreadful scenes you unfold ! Is this *Veratio*, the portraiture of unmasked death ? Do all my fellow-creatures die thus miserable ? And is there no such thing as a comfortable

comfortable DEATH to be seen? O, sir, my very flesh shudders at these awful discoveries.

My guide replied, Know, young man, that sorrow is antecedent to joy, grief before consolation, darkness before light, and humility before honour. Shrink not back when the cup of bitterness kisseth your lips, seeing it is preparative to the cup of salvation. But if *Novitio* trembles to see such horrible appearances of DEATH, only think what they must feel who endure it? However, compassioning your timorous disposition, I shall only shew you one instance more of the death of the ungodly; after which I shall endeavour to recompense your pain by more pleasant discoveries. I mean, I shall discover unto you some of the godly, with their latter end. In the mean while, let us attend the disconsolate *Letitia* in her parting agonies.

THIS said, he led me away to a magnificent apartment, decorated with all the productions of art. In this apartment, brilliant as it was, we saw a lady, whom all the riches of the east could not make happy; she lay on a bed of down, surrounded with hangings of damask it is true, but found no more rest than if she had lain on cornered flints; she was under the power of an inveterate malady, and had been for several years; but greatly added thereunto by murmuring at, and repining under the afflictive dispensation. She seemed to me to be about thirty-five years of age, and had been possessed of a goodly measure of external beauty, before it was blasted by this inveterate evil; so that, whilst a maiden, she was what we commonly call a genteel lady; and whatever qualifications *Teresa* could boast of, were all to be found in the youthful *Letitia*. In her affliction, which was indeed grievous, being a cancer in the breast, she greatly envied the

the happiness of her visitors, purely because they enjoyed health, the loss of which she inconsolably lamented; and instead of receiving the visits of her friends with that grateful civility which might have been expected from a person of her rank and education reduced to such distressing circumstances, she was used to give it them in some such terms as these:

IT is well for you; you can go abroad at your pleasure, and visit your friends, and with them partake of the sweetness of life: you may make much of it now, for you have all the genteel amusements to yourselves: as for me, I know not what evil I have committed more than others, that I should be imprisoned in this solitary place, to endure such racking pains as I do. I hear of many who have lived far more liberal than ever I did, who still continue to enjoy all the pleasures which either town or country can afford; but I must lie here on this irksome bed, and nobody knows when I shall be able to go abroad, so much as to take an airing, or to see one friend or another. I employ the best physician in the county; but how it is, I know not, he can cure others, but all his prescriptions seem to be lost upon me. It was thus she entertained her friends, and thus she rendered herself disagreeable to all that came near her.

A GODLY minister in the neighbourhood was used occasionally to visit her, but his company was never very desirable to her, his conversation being by far too serious for a lady of her disposition of mind: her elevated station, and the known precariousness of her temper, long deterred him from dealing so faithfully with her as he desired; but at last he greatly offended, by telling her, that she ought to consider herself as a dying woman, liable to give an account

all

D E A T H :

All her actions to a just and impartial God, whose sentence cannot possibly be evaded. He faithfully told her, that she must be regenerated by the spirit of God, and sprinkled with the blood of Christ, before she had any reason to expect that her death would be comfortable. He told her, that unless she was renewed by the Holy Ghost, that no regard would be paid at the great tribunal to her elevated station in life, for only those in every nation who fear God and work righteousness shall be saved; for the Lord God, said he, is no respecter of persons.

By this seasonable advice, and such salutary instruction, the good *Philanthropos* incurred her ladyship's displeasure so far, that she could never after gratefully receive a visit from him, but was always sullen and out of temper in his company.

THE venerable *Veratio* turned himself to me, and thus he said; *Letitia* was a fine gentlewoman, a descendant of a right honourable and illustrious family, by birth intitled to a very considerable fortune, and genteely handsome in her person. Her noble parents, with all imaginable tenderness, from her earliest days, indulged her to the last degree; they never cared to cross her inclinations, or restrain her humour; however extravagant; by which means she became imperious and haughty, a perfect humourist in her temper. From her youth upward she was inured to all the vanities of the town; the park, the playhouse, and the opera, were as familiar to her as her bed-chamber, and well she knew how to act her part in every genteel entertainment. Her beauty, rank, and fortune, brought a noble earl lawfully to her bed, about the age of twenty-one. Being now commenced wife, she abated nothing of the pleasures to which she had devoted

devoted herself, but added very considerably thereunto, by receiving and returning many useless and unprofitable visits, until the unhappy time on which she was visited by this malignant evil, which is indeed the forerunner of her death; and then she was out of temper with every body who came near her. Husband, children, and servants, all shared in her anger. *Letitia's* beauty was esteemed more than eastern pearls; she vainly imagined that the diamond lost its brilliance when her eye deigned to glance upon it; and the damask rose its liveliness, when compared to her more lively cheek; and the coral she supposed to yield all its perfection, and own itself undone when her mellifluous and pleasant lips were unmasked: but poignant pain, and frequent sickness, greatly impaired her adored beauty, and surprisingly added to her affliction. So long as her strength would admit of it, she was wont to try her features in the looking-glass oftener than once a day; but how the faithful mirror was charged with falshood, and bore the weight of her indignation, is not worth your while to hear, or mine to relate.

O, SIR, said I, methinks that on all our *looking-glasses* this motto, *memento mori*, ought to be fixed; for even beauties, who delight to gaze upon looking-glasses, meet with no reprieve from DEATH.

THAT son of *Melpomene*, who so judiciously hath drawn the portraiture of the grave, represents beauty as not one whit more grateful to the worms than deformity, and as certainly their feast. If you please, sir, I shall recite the passage to you.

“ Beauty! thou pretty play-thing! dear deceit!

“ That steals so softly o’er the stripling’s heart,

“ And

- “ And gives it a new pulse unknown before !
 “ The grave discredits thee : thy charms expung’d,
 “ Thy roses faded, and thy lilies soil’d ;
 “ What hast thou more to boast of ? will thy lovers
 “ Flock round thee now to gaze and do thee homage ?
 “ Methinks I see thee with thy head low laid,
 “ Whilst surfeited upon thy damask cheek,
 “ The high-fed worm in lazy volumes roll’d,
 “ Riots unscar’d. For this was all thy caution ?
 “ For this thy painful labours at the glass ?
 “ T’improve these charms, and keep them in repair,
 “ For which the spoiler thanks thee not. Foul feeder !
 “ Coarse fare and carrion please thee full as well,
 “ And leave as keen a relish on the sense.”

Blair.

Ay, said *Veratio*, Mr. *Blair* may sing in that strain a great while before our beauties are likely to mind what he says ; for, to this day, it hath been at the peril of any servant or attendant whatsoever, to tell *Letitia* that her looks are altered ; nor hath her physician and surgeon ever dared to tell her that her disease is incurable. Full of pain indeed is the unhappy lady ; but she languisheth out her time in murmuring and repining at the sad dispensation, and envying the happiness of others.

My guide finishing here, I thought in my dream that her physician entered the chamber, and, feeling the lady’s pulse, she asked him, if he thought there were no hopes of her recovery ? The doctor replied, “ I am afraid, madam, there
 “ is not.” Then she fell into a fit of visible discontent, and sinfully uttered many things against the ways of the Al-
 mighty ;

mighty; and continued, to her last, charging him with inequality.

THE time of her departure come, I saw terrible sights; her life being spent in gaiety and madness, her latter end was without honour; for no sooner was the unhappy soul drove forth from the once delicate body, now the vanquished prey of relentless DEATH, but she was seized by the cruel messengers of destruction, and forcibly dragged to appear at the equitable bar of a *pride-resisting* God; from whence, as a just reward of her unholy life, she was sent bound hand and foot to be cast into utter darkness, where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched: there she wept, she wailed, and gnashed her teeth. There she found many of her former companions; but alas! their wonted cheerfulness and mirth was departed, and horrid despair sat louring on every countenance; whilst the convulsive bowels of ever-dismal hell rolled her impetuous billows upon them, and every single sense drank in the unutterable torment.

THE miserable end of *Letitia* thus surveyed, I cried out, O God! who hath hardened himself against thee, and hath prospered? If a self-adoring Pharaoh say, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" Thou hast a Red Sea in which he shall be drowned. If an haughty Nebuchadnezzar say in his heart, "This is great Babylon which I have built for the house of my kingdom, and for the glory of my majesty;" the heart of a beast shall be given to him, and he shall eat grass like the oxen in the field; and if a God forgetting lady shall spend her life in the pursuit of transitory pleasures, the sequel shall prove that she has been dead to God whilst she lived to herself.

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THEN

THEN turning to my guide, I said, I perceive, sir, that DEATH is no respecter of persons, knoweth no distinctions, can neither be bribed nor moved by intreaty, much less can be resisted by power. No, no, replied, *Veratio*, DEATH cannot be intreated, is an utter enemy to mercy, and a perfect stranger to distinctions; the majestic prince, and the rustic peasant; the noble earl, and his servile groom; the amiable lady, and the scorched cook-maid are equally the same to his indiscriminating shaft; all distinctions vanish in the grave, that common receptacle of rich and poor, noble and ignoble, old and young; in this respect, one end happeneth to all men. These people of distinction too often appear to desire no other heaven besides the vain and fantastical pleasures of life, little considering that ere long they must bid adieu to sublunary enjoyments: and the most high God hath fixed it as an invariable maxim, that the desire after must precede the enjoyment of heaven. Hence, no desires after the future enjoyment of God being possessed in this life, it is not rationally to be expected, that they can enter into the celestial felicity at their death.

THESE earthly gods, continued *Veratio*, are much dissatisfied if they receive not a great degree of homage from their inferiors in life; but, believe me, nothing is nothing is more common than for them at death to stand trembling under the force of self-conviction, before the judgment-seat of the King of Kings, who hath declared himself to be no respecter of persons.

THEN, said I, woe is me for my fellow creatures! into what destruction has sin involved them! How few, alas! are they who know the things which make for their eternal peace, before time be for ever hid from their eyes?

Unhappy,

Unhappy, most emphatically unhappy indeed are they, whose only heaven consists of glittering dust, and whose desired bliss is composed of the empty honours and wretched pleasures of this seducing and bewitching world. Let honours in the highest degree be imposed upon me, and let me enjoy all that men call pleasurable; what will it profit me if my soul must be banished, for ever banished, from the amiable presence of my God? Can these, *Veratio*, ever be deemed an ample compensation for the loss of God, in his divine excellencies and glorious subsistences? A lean; an empty heaven indeed it must be, where this is wanting. O, my soul, let thy delights for ever be attracted by the refined, the sublime pleasures of our holy religion! and thou, my heart, look down with indifference upon all those fineries which worldlings so much admire!

HAVING thus spoke, I thought that my guide, the good *Veratio*, led me from this to another apartment in the opposite side of this stately building; and, as we entered the apartment, I heard a person, with a mournful tone of voice, thus express himself: *Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage, a few days and full of sorrow.* What is the meaning of this? said I, this is a strange kind of saying. To which he replied, You will understand this better anon. When we were entered within the chamber, I saw a grave man of advanced years, who seemed to be in great distress both of body and mind; and thus he addressed some of his friends who attended him:

O MY friends, you little know what a sinner I have been! let sinners of highest rank be thought of, and I assure you I am a greater sinner than them all; yea, I am the very chief of sinners, the vilest and most unworthy crea-

ture in the world. O my friends ! how justly doth the Lord afflict me now ! he leaves me not comfortless in my last trials without dreadful provocation : such provocations as make my very heart bleed to think of them : justly, alas ! am I left to the scourge of an evil conscience, and made an instance of the terrible displeasure of an offended God. O what innumerable mercies have I enjoyed at his hand ! but such hath been the sinfulness of my ways, that I have grossly abused them, trampled them all under my feet ; and what can I now expect but to be for ever banished from the presence of him whose goodness I have so grossly abused, and against whom I have most ungratefully sinned. I tremble to think of enduring his displeasure ; but, if I must endure it, I know it is my desert, and in my condemnation I will confess him righteous, for I, only I, have destroyed myself.

HERE he was stopped by excess of grief, which vented itself in a flood of tears, and one of his friends who sat by him thus replied : My dear friend, I am exceedingly surprized to hear you lay such heavy accusations against yourself ; you charge yourself with the worst and basest of crimes ; whereas all we, your friends and acquaintance, are fully convinced, that ever since you made a profession of religion, your moral conduct hath been unblameable ; yea, that the whole of your conversation hath been becoming true godliness.

To which the sick man replied : O my friend ! [it is that, it is that that grieves me now ! O how it pains me to think that people who could only see my outside appearance, took me to be somewhat ; when, alas ! my own heart all along told me, that I was nothing ; and, even now, the
discovery

discovery of the pride and hypocrisy of my heart is a burden intolerable to me: I would fain have been sincere, it is true, and I often thought that I strove for it; but, O wretched and miserable creature that I am! I never could attain to it. Sometimes, formerly, I flattered myself that I was one of the Lord's people; but now the disguise is taken off, and I am convinced that I have been, and still am, an enemy to all real righteousness, and an utter stranger to the heart-purifying religion of the holy Jesus.

O HOW it grieves me, my friends, to think how I have imposed upon the church of Christ, where I have only been an intruder, a filthy goat amongst the innocent sheep of the Redeemer! but now it is my greatest fear, that I shall be for ever separated from both him and them.

HERE he was again stopped by the anguish of his spirit, and after a few minutes, another friend of his, in a spirited manner, replied: My dear brother, this is only a temptation of the enemy; and such, I trust, ere long you will find it to be. It hath pleased the Lord to withdraw from you for a moment, and for holy ends, to leave you to the buffetings of Satan: but, believe me, believe God himself, he will return with mercy and salvation, and with everlasting loving-kindness he will gather you. What though your sins are great, the merit of the Redeemer's sacrifice is infinitely greater; what though the cry of them reach even to the heavens, his precious atonement surmounts them all; yea, what although they are of a scarlet or crimson stain, the blood of Jesus shall wash you and make you white as wool, or the whiter snow. Satan is indeed permitted, as the accuser of the brethren, to load your conscience with heavy accusations; but yet a very little while, and the base accuser

shall be cast down; Satan shall be trampled for ever under your feet.

LET my friend consider the many great and precious promises which are made to the *poor in spirit*, the *weary and heavy laden*, the *captive*, the broken-hearted sinner, the *hungering and thirsting soul*, the *mourner for sin*, &c. these are the names and characters of the Redeemer's sheep, and all these meet together in my brother; which is to us, though not to yourself, an evident token of your adoption by grace into the elect family. Had he not loved you, he would never have put his own seal upon you; had he not chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, you could never thus have groaned under the depravity of your nature; and having loved you, it is with an everlasting love, a love which never can alter, but is sure to endure to the end. How can my brother sink whilst the arm of everlasting love is underneath him? O my friend! think of the above characters of the redeemed, and try if you find not some of them belonging to yourself.

He ceased here, and the sick man with a trembling voice, replied: I thank you, my dear sir, in the most grateful manner, for your tender care for my welfare; but, alas! I can see nothing in me that looks in the least like to the character of the Redeemer's people: I see no promise in the Bible that belongs to me; for a word of promise would be a comforting stay to my sinful soul, now in my last distress. It is true, that many times in my life, the trouble of my mind hath been alleviated by such considerations as you propose; but now I am a dying man, ready to launch forth into a dark eternity, and cannot draw rational conclusions from such considerations. O eternity! eternity! nothing can make me look into eternity with pleasure, or render DEATH in any-wise comfortable to me, but a sensible manifestation

of my interest in the death and resurrection of Christ, the Spirit himself bearing witness with my own spirit that I belong to God, and am born of him. The pain of dying is nothing comparable to the pangs of soul that I feel in looking forward to a dreadful futurity : I may now say in the language of the Psalmist, *Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of his water spouts, all his waves and his billows are gone over me. I sink in deep waters, wherein there is no standing.* I know, my friends, you would have me to trust in God and apply the promises to myself; and gladly I would, but I find that I can as soon remove mountains, and cast them into the sea, as to trust and believe in God with an appropriating faith. He hideth himself from me, and how shall I discern him ? O that I knew where I might find him ! I would come with Job even to his seat, and spread my complaint before him ; but alas ! he covereth himself with darkness, and will not admit of my approaches to him ; I press forward, but cannot find him ; I look backward to past experience, but can see no tract of his Spirit's work ; I turn me as it were to the right hand and left, but can perceive nothing at all of him. On the contrary, I am environed with devils, and my own sins, which are more frightful to me than all the infernal tribes : these do separate betwixt God and me.

I THOUGHT that here the poor man's words were a third time interrupted with the agitation of his grief, and he shed abundance of tears : his friends prayed with and for him, fervent and much distressed they seemed to be in prayer ; every one imitating the conduct of the wrestling patriarch, when at Peniel ; they likewise reasoned with him concerning the immutability of divine love, the infinite value of the blood of Christ, the certainty of the promises of the cove-

nant, the wise ends which God might have in withdrawing from him in his calamity, the assurance which the scriptures give us of the Holy Spirit finishing his work in the souls of his people, and the confirmed malice of the implacable tempter ; withal expressing their hope that the Lord would yet appear for him in a way of consolation, before he would take him down into the dark valley of the shadow of death ; but, if it should be otherwise, they expressed their assurance of his landing safe on the shore of felicity ; but all their endeavours seemed to be fruitless ; for he still persisted in his belief that the righteous God had, in strict justice, cast him off, as unworthy of a place among his chosen ones.

I now turned to my guide with a kind of disdain on my countenance, and thus addressed him : Ah, sir, what a wretched deceiver this man must have been, in his life-time, that he is thus given up to the scourge of an evil conscience at his death ! O ! it is a fearful thing thus to play the hypocrite with God.

To which my guide, with some warmth, replied : I told you before, *Novitio*, that you must not always judge of a man's estate according to the outward appearance of things. This man, whom you so rashly censure as a deceitful hypocrite, is the good *Humilius* : so far from being what you apprehend, that he is one of the precious sons of Zion, a faithful disciple of the Redeemer, and a special favourite of Jehovah, whose ways are in the deep waters, and whose judgments are unsearchable. Whilst health and vigour attended *Humilius*, he was blessed with a greater than ordinary discovery of his own sinfulness, both in the root and in the fruit ; and he was one of the very few who grieved daily under a sense of the pollutions of his depraved heart,
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and consequently under a sense of the defilement and imperfections of his very best services. This discovery greatly tended to lessen his comfort and joy, but at the same time it had an happy tendency to make him extremely careful of all his proceedings. His conscience was affected with the slightest touch of sin, and smote him even for an un sanctified thought ; and he retained such a sense of sin, that he was always low and mean in his own esteem. Contrary to the practice of many professors, he accounted himself the unworthiest of all, utterly unworthy of a place in the church of Christ. On the other hand, his fellow Christians looked on him as a man of exemplary piety, holy and unrebukable in his conversation in the church, and in the world ; patient in tribulation, fervent and instant in prayer, desiring not his own, but the glory of God ; not his own, so much as the good of the church of Christ.

THIS unexpected account of *Humilius* greatly amazed me, and made me more solicitous to know what the event might be.

THEREFORE I addressed my guide in the following manner : Venerable sir, I readily acknowledge my error, and humbly beg your pardon for my foolish censure ; and I beg you would signify your forgiveness by informing me, whether it is possible for such, as you have described *Humilius* to be, to be cast off by the Almighty, and perish at last. To which I thought *Veratio* replied : No, *Novitio*, it cannot possibly be that such a one can perish, for there are none but the regenerated who can answer the description which I have given of the good *Humilius* ; and any one may know, that none are regenerated but those who are the objects of God's special love ; and all those he loves with an
ever-

everlasting love, he loves them to the end ; therefore, however dark he may be with regard to union with, and interest in, the Lord Jesus Christ, and through him in the love of God, it is not possible that he can be lost. These are dark paths, *Novitio*, through which *Humilius* is led ; nevertheless they are sure paths, and lead directly to the kingdom of light : and let me tell you, he is led even now by the fountain of light himself, notwithstanding he seems to be blind to any sense of his leader's presence. His patience under his affliction, his resignation to the divine will, with respect to bodily pain, and his justifying the ways of God, together with his earnest desire after forgiveness and acceptance, are so many evidences of his interest in the love of God, though at present he can see none of them.

SIR, said I, permit me to ask you another question, for I am born to be troublesome. Can there be any reasons assigned, why the Lord should suffer some of his dearest saints to fall into such desertion and distress in their latest hours ?

YES, *Novitio*, said he, some reasons may be assigned why it should sometimes be so ; but want of love in God to their persons, want of tenderness in the Redeemer, can never be justly thought to be the reason for it : but God hath holy ends to answer by every part of his procedure, and no doubt in this dispensation also. And I suppose that one end, which he may propose by the troubles of good *Humilius*, may be, to stir up his professing people to double their diligence in the use of all appointed means, thereby to make their calling and election sure to themselves ; that when they arrive at their latest hours, they may be exempted from those spiritual

ritual conflicts which they see others exercised with. Ah, but, sir, said I, how is it that the Lord maketh choice of those who are most eminent in holiness, to endure those afflictions which are designed for the edification and improvement of their surviving brethren?

VERATIO replied, There is no necessity that I know of, *Novitio*, for you to ask a reason for the proceedings of the Almighty; nevertheless the difficulty here doth vanish, when it is considered, that for the Most High to choose, for such purposes, persons whose conduct hath been less guarded, would not answer the same end; for people naturally expect that professors, who are unguarded in their conduct, and remiss in the known duties of religion, will find hard work of it on a death-bed, which will be no less troublesome to them than if they lay upon pointed flints; so that, although the party himself may at last be saved, it is through fiery temptations and grievous afflictions. But when Christian people behold a person of the most circumspect and conscientious conversation, springing from principles of the most eminent piety, mourning after an absent God, and lamenting his sins, which all the world besides himself are strangers to, it naturally tendeth to stir up each to self-examination, and to consider his own ways. The learned *Fleming* relates a story of a northern worthy who had been, in diverse cases, favoured with an extraordinary discovery of the mind and will of God, who, when he came to a death-bed, called his friends to him, and thus addressed them: *O my friends! I find it a great matter to be a real Christian, and unrebukable before God: I declare to you, that such hath been my support for the space of ten years by-past, that God hath not been out of my thoughts as long at once, as one might go to the Cross and come again (which might be*
done

done in ten minutes) unless I have been asleep or about business, and after all, I assure you, that I am even now at the very brink of despair.

ANOTHER end which God may have in view, perhaps, may be, to remove the carnal confidence which his own people are too prone to have, in the grace which they have already received; vainly imagining that they can overcome the severest trial in the strength thereof, and with an ancient professor, when he stood on a place slippery enough, ready to say, *My mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved*: not considering that the Christian's conquest dependeth not on the grace which he hath already received, but on fresh supplies communicated in the time of need, from him in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. But the sublime exercise of Christian faith consists in a constant reliance upon *God in Christ*, for mercy to pardon every sin, and for grace to help in every time of need.

Now when Christian people behold the greatest of saints labouring in the dark, under the severest conflicts of soul, it naturally tendeth to make them suspect their supposed strength, and to exercise themselves in a habitual reliance upon God. And, seeing their need of fresh supplies of grace, how naturally are they led by such dispensations to the inexhaustible fountain of all fulness, for strength proportioned to their day of difficulty and trial; and especially for large supplies in their death-bed trials, because very often they are found to be the greatest; and well it is that the Lord is pleased by any means to teach his people to live upon himself.

BUT

BUT come, *Novitio*, and I will discover to you the immediate cause of the sorrow of good *Humilius*.

THIS said, the venerable *Veratio* anointed my eyes with his precious eye-salve, and in an instant I discerned a deformed fiend crouching close by the side of *Humilius*, and whispering him in the ear; and, at every sigh which the good man made through the pressure of his grief, the malicious *Fury* smiled a most ghastly grin. But giving a close attention to this *evidence-darkener*, I perceived a chain harder than adamant around his middle, the end of which was secure in the hand of a majestic person, who shone brighter by far than the sun in his strength; by which I saw, that although it may please the Almighty sometimes to permit Satan to disturb the minds of his chosen ones, he never suffers him to destroy them.

LEARN from hence, *Novitio*, said *Veratio* to me, that the same enemy who allures to sin, whilst in health and prosperity, will, if permitted, tempt to despair in a state of sickness and adversity. And be you, yea let every Christian be thankful that Satan is ever kept under a suitable restraint by the power of Almighty God, otherwise feeble mortals must of necessity sink under his great superiority.

HERE my guide ceased, and, as I thought, the good *Humilius* for the last time opened his mouth and said, Ever since I knew any thing of religion, flying to Christ has been my last resource; I am now dreadfully oppressed with the weight of my sins, but whither shall I fly for help, but to the mercy of that God against whom I have sinned? there is none in the heavens above, nor upon the earth below, that can help me but He; as it has been in my life-time,

so it is now, this is my last resource ; I die if I trust him not ; I can but die if I trust in him ; therefore I will prostrate my soul at the foot of his throne, and there will I sue for mercy ; if I perish, I perish ! and if I should, as I deserve, be spurned from his presence, it shall be relying on the blood and righteousness of Christ, for there is salvation in none other.

HAVING uttered these words, with the dying rattle in his throat, his speech failed, to the great grief of his godly acquaintance, some of whom said, Alas ! lest this should be a means of turning the lame out of the way. And one thing I beheld pleased me mightily, which was this, the moment that good *Humilius* ceased to speak, the majestic person that I spoke of, who shone so gloriously, gave the chain, where-withal the fury was bound, a severe twitch, which obliged him to leave the good man to his rest ; and which so enraged the squalid infernal, that he growled most horribly, and in very pain gnawed the adamant chain, then disappeared, and I saw him no more.

IN the mean while my benevolent guide, by some supernatural means, opened my ears that I could hear and in some measure understand the language of spirits, which I no sooner perceived, than with all the diligence I attended to what now passed with the good *Humilius* ; in whose concerns I found myself by this time deeply interested ; and as I listened, I heard the Almighty, who but a little before seemed to stand upon mount Sinai, surrounded with clouds of darkness, and horrible tempest, now speak from mount Zion in a still small voice, and said to the speechless man, *I have loved thee with an everlasting and immutable love, therefore I have drawn thee by dark paths to myself ; yea, I have caused thee to pass under the rod, and have brought thee into the bond of*
the

the covenant. The way which I led thee thou knowest not, but I have made crooked places straight before thee, and rough places smooth : thy warfare is now accomplished, and I have bruised Satan for ever under thy feet.

THE dying man no sooner felt the blessed effects of the well-known voice of God, than in an extasy of joy he mentally replied, *My Lord, and my God!* Now DEATH, do thy worst ; come as soon as thou wilt, thou awful skeleton, for now thou art welcome. Now my Lord is returned with loving-kindness, I can with pleasure enter thy cold embrace, and repose my flesh in thy gloomy mansions ; hasten thy pace, thou tardy executioner ; cut short thy work, thou friendly enemy. I long to enjoy the beatific vision of him who loved me, and washed me in his blood.

I SAW in my dream, that the guardian angels descended from heaven in blazing squadrons, to attend the dismissal of this sanctified soul, and to guard her passage to the celestial world. As the good *Humilius* ceased to breathe, the attending angels clapped their wings for joy, that one more of the chosen race had passed through the *glory-birth*, that one more of the elect charge was safely gathered home : with holy fervour they saluted the glorious spirit, and bid her welcome into the undisturbed rest of their splendid society. She thankfully received their pure caresses, and instantly mixed her melodious voice with those warbling choristers who attended her, and who sung the most delightful song that ever ear attended to ; and I thought I could discern the glorious notes of sweet deliverance from the lips of the newly departed soul, in a key more exalted than the rest. O with what pleasure did I listen to the so-

lemn

lemn song of one who so very lately was languishing in deep distress!

HAVING sung the noble anthem, to distinguishing love and unfrustrable grace, she with all her glorious attendants stretched their brilliant pinions, and swift as thought shot through the vault of heaven towards the regions of eternal felicity. And as soon as they arrived in the empyrean plain, I beheld innumerable companies of the celestial hosts in their long, their glorious and refulgent garments, with crowns of gold upon their heads, and triumphant palms in their hands, come in bright procession to the golden gates of the New Jerusalem, to congratulate the soul on her safe arrival in the *glory-world*, and in triumph to conduct her up to the throne of God. As they passed along through the streets of paradise, which were all paved with diamonds and topazes, the departed *Humilius* was often saluted by his former companions in warfare, who greatly rejoiced that his course of pilgrimage was finished, and that the time of his coronation was come; and in their bright procession from the golden gates of the holy city up to the JASPER THRONE, shouts of loud joy and peals of rapturous triumph burst from each tongue, and made all the celestial arches ring in concert with their elevated voices.

I THOUGHT I saw the blessed, the ever-adorable Jesus descend from the midst of the throne, and meeting *Humilius*, embraced him with tender affection; he also called upon the excellent *Theophilus*, under whose ministry *Humilius*, it seems, had been savingly converted, and let him know that now another diamond must be added to his crown, as another of the children whom God had given to his faithful ministry was happily arrived. Then he
took

took *Humilius* by the hand, led him up to the all-glorious throne, and to Him who sat in the most majestic state thereon, he said, *Most holy Father, behold this darling object of thy love and choice, this subject of my redemption is safely arrived in thy more immediate and most joyous presence; being fully prepared for it by the divine influence of the Holy Ghost. Let him now possess the mansion which hath so long been prepared for him, and enjoy the rest unto which he was predestinated.*

THEN He who sat on the throne thus bespoke the soul, *Come, my beloved one, receive the joys which I have prepared for thee, and the glory unto which I appointed thee; for I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and by my special care of thee I have drawn thee to my glory.*

THEN the records of eternity were all laid open before him, who now being blest with the beatific vision, could read therein every line which related to his own state either in time or in eternity. And oh, how great was the wonder of the soul! How inflamed was her gratitude, when she found every circumstance attending her pilgrimage below, was unalterably fixed in the decrees of God, which are so dark and difficult unto us in the church below! With holy amazement she beheld, that the whole chain of time's providence flowed from and centered in the love of God to her in the person of Christ. Silent no longer could she sit, but her wonder broke forth in rapturous songs of ceaseless praises, in concert with all the redeemed hosts, who now, in the fervour of unutterable love, struck the golden harp and sung responsive to the trembling wire.

HAVING followed *Humilius* thus far, *Veratio* spoke to me, and lo! the vision was withdrawn; but left some impressions on my mind which I trust will never be erased; and being at last capable of a little reflection, after my wonder and astonishment was abated, I could not help thinking of the infinite difference betwixt these who die in the Lord, and those who die in their sins; the latter being precipitately plunged into the fearful abyss of dark and ever-burning hell, where the worm dieth not; whereas the former are immediately transported on angelic wings, from a land of sin and many sorrows, into the more immediate presence and ineffable light of the *ever blessed Three*, to partake of all the joys of the *undivided One*; then I said, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.*

As I was ruminating on these things, I thought that my guide called me away, saying we may yet see DEATH attended with very different circumstances; and although I thought myself by the last scene fully repaid for all the terror I had undergone at the beginning of my acquaintance with *Veratio*, I found myself inspired with the most eager desire to have farther discoveries of sanctified DEATH; therefore, I followed him with the greatest eagerness out of this chamber, wherein I had viewed such an agreeable scene, into another apartment adjacent to it, and there he shewed me an happy disciple, who with great composure of mind was laid on a sick bed, though under the pressure of heavy affliction; calm and serene in the midst of tempestuous trouble; in the midst of trying sorrow his patience stood unmoved, even as the stately oak lifts up its lofty head, despiting the western tempest; or as the stable rock, amidst the furious surges, endures their wrathful discharge
without

without the least emotion. Rent with racking pain, and oppressed with deathly sickness, he patiently, though with a trembling voice, said, Good is the Lord's will concerning me! the cup that my heavenly father hath mingled for me, shall I not patiently drink it? I thought in my dream that he was thus addressed by one of his friends; Sir, I would have you to repose yourself a little, for your afflictions are very heavy; and notwithstanding your spirit is submissive, your flesh must needs be very weak. To which he replied, My afflictions are all known to the Lord, yea it is my God who hath fixed the degree of them; and seeing the Almighty is pleased to do it, I dare not, I cannot complain, for I am well assured that he can do nothing wrong. Were it not right he could not do it, *omnipotent* as he is. My afflictions indeed make this clay tabernacle to totter, but are lighter than nothing when put in the balance with my sins. I well know they might be infinitely greater, and yet my God be a just God. But mercy and tender compassion guides his hand even when he smites, and his bowels yearn when he mingles a bitter cup for any of us. I am fully persuaded that he will lay no more upon me himself, nor suffer others to lay any more upon me, than he will support me under; for the Lord is very pitiful and full of mercy even to me, though I deserve nothing at all at his hand but to be left to lie down in sorrow; I am therefore altogether easy about the measure of my afflictions.

It was here he stopped, and one of his friends rejoined; My dear sir, how great is the blessing to be thus filled with comfort in the midst of your afflictions! To which the sick man replied: Indeed, my friend, my comforts are far from being so high ^{as} you ~~im~~agine; on the contrary, I assure you

that sensible enjoyment runs very low with me at present. But this is the ground of all my confidence, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*; he is the rock of my soul, and however my comforts flow, I account them not my Christ. Since it pleased the Lord to visit me with this affliction, which I think is drawing near to a period, I have had many struggles with my own unbelieving heart, and many conflicts with Satan, in regard to my interest in the love of God. But, glory to the Almighty name, the enemy seems to be withdrawn; my anchor is within the vail, and my hope is fixed in Immanuel. I myself am a poor helpless worm, and my faith is very tottering, but the rock of my salvation, the object of my faith, can never be shaken; he remains, and I rejoice in it; he remains the same for ever; with him there is no variableness, nor the least shadow of turning.

AFTER all, continued he, I must confess that I have often been indulged with the sensible manifestations of divine love, when to my own apprehension I stood less in need than I do now. But O, let me not attempt to correct the proceedings of unerring wisdom! The Lord's ways are the best, and I desire to submit to them; he hath graciously promised that he will never leave nor forsake me, and I account him faithful who hath promised. I bless him for his word.—This is the hold into which I fly for shelter in the dark and stormy day. I would not for all the world be without an interest in the above precious promise, for I live not now by sense, but by faith, and this affliction hath found a good deal of work for the little faith I have. Believe me, my friends, I have often been obliged, in times of darkness and difficulty, to live upon the external word of grace, and it has upon the whole been spirit and life to my soul.

soul. I never knew the promise to fail, but the word on which he hath caused me to hope, hath always been confirmed to me. I have ever found the Almighty to be as good as his word, ever better than my fears suggested, and infinitely more gracious than my deserts.

THE sick man being spent with so much speaking, I thought that he was obliged to silence for a small space to recover himself. But such was his zeal for the welfare of his friends, that as soon as possible he spake to them as follows.

My dear brethren, in all appearance I am now near, very near my last hour, and I tell you, and beg that you will regard it as the words of a dying man, that the cross of Christ is of excellent use in mortifying us to creature objects. Cross dispensations of Providence, bodily afflictions, and the temptations of Satan are such excellent corrosives, that by the direction and influence of God the Spirit, they prove the destruction of sin in our members. For my own part I declare to you all that I have learned more of God by afflictions, than by all the sermons that I have ever heard preached.

It was now that *Veratio* whispered thus to me; I well believe, *Novitio*, what this good man says of his afflictions, for as the fervent fire is to the golden ore, and water to the sullied linen, so is sanctified afflictions to those who are exercised with them. Parricide is lawful in no case else but this; here it is a righteous thing, that afflictions, which are the legitimate offspring of sin, should first curb the power, and at last destroy the being of their accursed parent. And

for our comfort, let us know that afflictions themselves cannot survive the sin which they instrumentally destroy.

In the mean while the dying man continued and said, My dear friends, despise not the chastening of the Lord; resist not affliction with a foolish Pagan bravery; neither murmur, repine, nor faint when you are rebuked by him; for he chastiseth not in anger, neither does he rebuke in hot displeasure. If you are the objects of divine love, you must expect the application of the rod, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If you are the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, you must expect in this life to bear the cross, for it is always antecedent to the crown. Be you assured, my friends, that the way in which no cross is found, must needs be the broad and downward way; for the cross of Christ is the right, the only path-way to the kingdom; and those who despise and reject the cross will find themselves at death deprived of the crown. Here he stopped again, his strength being exhausted, and his silent friends stood with a mournful pleasure around his bed. And after some time, one of them made so free as to ask him, whether he would choose to live or die, on supposition that the Almighty would grant his desire? To which, being a little refreshed, he replied: Indeed, my friend, I cannot tell you; for so far as I know my own heart, which hath all along been a mystery to me, I neither desire life nor death; for me to live is Christ, and for me to die is eternal gain. I know that the Almighty hath numbered my days, and my months are with him; he hath fixed the bounds of my habitation, and I cannot pass over it; yea, he hath by an immutable decree fixed the very moment and means of my dissolution. Why then should I anxiously think or care any thing at all about it? His purposes are for ever the same, and the thoughts of his heart unto all generations.

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His council shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure: if I am appointed to death, as I think I am, I trust he will glorify himself in my death; and if it should be that I am appointed to life, he hath wisdom and power sufficient to glorify himself in my life. I yield myself wholly to his disposal, for the judge of all the earth can never do wrong; living and dying may God be glorified in me.

HERE he ceased, and his friend with visible sympathy rejoined: Happy, my dear brother, it is for you to be thus indulged with strength from on high, in the time of your great distress. But tell me, my friend, if your strength will permit, do tell me, if you have no desire to live and see your wife and children comfortably provided for? Methinks it is a desirable thing to see our children educated in a religious manner, and settled agreeably in the world. These things often lie with a distressing weight upon my mind, and are ties which strongly bind me down to earth, and which I sincerely desire to be delivered from.

THE sick man replied, My dear friend, I must confess to you, that, next to the welfare of the Redeemer's church, my wife and children are dear to me, and if any thing could now prevail with me to desire a longer sojournment in this valley of sorrows, it would be the welfare of my dear children, and dearer wife, for they have always been dear to me ever since I enjoyed them; and consulting their welfare, hath formerly been attended with great anxiety. But now I see, that in my past overcarefulness I was far from being submissive to the sovereign pleasure of an all-disposing God; but as far as lay within my power was for wresting the dispensations of his providence out of his unerring hand. Had I done what I could to promote their welfare, and left the

issue to the Almighty, I had done well: but alas! I could not be easy, unless I evidently saw the issue answer my desire. But blessed for ever be that God who turneth our hearts as he does the rivers of water; at present all anxiety appears to be gone, and my wife and children are no burthen at all to my mind; for I know that the God whom I serve will convert the stones of the wall into bread, before he will suffer the seed of the righteous to famish*.

SETTLING my children in the world appeared a very desirable thing before I came to a death-bed, but now I am taught that their settling in the world does not in the least depend on my being present with them; for the determination of a Jehovah hath long since divinely gone forth by a firm and unalterable decree, in which all their circumstances, great and minute, are infallibly settled, by the unerring wisdom of him who worketh all things after no other council but that of his *own will*. The life of the sparrow and the dinner of the raven are provided for in his grand decree; yea, the very hairs on our bodies are numbered, coloured, and disposed by unerring wisdom; much more are the bounds of our habitation, and the extent of our possessions, the result of divine appointment. If the Lord is pleased to make my children poor (as it is his prerogative to make poor) how shall my presence with them be able to make them rich? or if he in his sovereign bounty shall be pleased to exalt and make them rich, what circumstances so pernicious as to be able to prevent the execution of his design? Holy and reverend is his name, he disposeth of all creatures and things as his godly wisdom doth direct. By his determination kings

* An illustrious instance of divine regard to the seed of the righteous, and care for the widow and fatherless, we have in the provision made for the numerous family of a worthy minister lately deceased.

reign, and princes decree justice. Races and battles are under his direction; yea, the very turning up of the lot is determined by Jehovah; much more the station and circumstances of his people, and their children. Why then should I desire to interfere in the matter of settling them, to the disquieting of my own mind; for God both can and will bring his purposes to pass without my instrumentality, if he is pleased to take me hence?

THEIR education in religious principles hath been by far the most tender point with me, well knowing the influence which a godly education often hath upon the conduct of youth: but this also I am enabled to leave with the Lord. Not from any indifferency towards them, so as to be careless about their welfare in time or eternity; but I have ever been so sensible of my deficiency, in regard to parental duty, that I have often feared that my children were more injured by my imperfections than profited by my precepts and instructions. Besides, I am fully persuaded that God will be at no loss for an instrument, when he is about to teach them the knowledge of himself.

BE assured, my friends, that children are not brought one hour sooner to the knowledge of God, on account of their parents life being preserved; but many have, by the means of their parents death, been brought into circumstances whereby the Lord has been pleased to lead them into the knowledge of themselves, and the secret of his own immutable love to their persons. Therefore I commit my tender offspring to the protection and grace of him, who has deigned to become the father of the fatherless, and who hath said to men in my condition, *Leave your fatherless children and your widows to me*; he is of all other guardians

dians the most disinterested. My dear *Honora*, my beloved spouse, always hath been dear to me, ever since it pleased the Lord, by his holy ordinance, to make us one; but although she is dear to me, so that we seemed to possess but one soul, I can with pleasure leave her a few days behind me in this world, notwithstanding it is, and she finds it to be, a world of sin and sorrow; well knowing that she is an elect vessel, a daughter of faithful Abraham, and an heiress according to the promise; and as such she is under divine protection and cannot miscarry. Fear not, my dear *Honora*, fear not the safety of your passage through life. I know that this world is a land of snares, and a hell of pain and sorrow, when compared with the land of pure felicity to which we are bound. It is, and, my dear, you know it to be a land inhabited with implacable enemies to the heaven-born pilgrims, who are passing through it; but let not this discourage my *Honora*, for *he who saved your soul from DEATH, will also preserve your feet from falling. He who hath loved you with an everlasting love, will bear you up through all difficulties and dangers, and make you more than a conqueror over them all.* It is your God—your husband and friend, who reigns supreme over all creation, who holds the reins of government in his own Almighty hand, and thereby curbeth the enemies of his people at pleasure; so that the most potent of them all cannot lift up his heel against a child of God without his divine permission; which he never granteth without a proper limitation, *Hitherto thou mayest come*, is the permission, *but thou shalt go no farther*, is the restraint: even as Satan obtained leave to destroy every thing which belonged to the pious Job, but was prohibited touching his life. Thus it is, that the feeblest of the Redeemer's flock dwell secure from real danger underneath the covert of divine protection.

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My dear *Honora*, our great Lord is a husband to the widow ; he is a wise director, a rich provider, and a powerful protector, and as such he is yours, yours in the strongest obligations ; yours in time, and to all eternity. The confidence I have in these things, makes me willingly resign the wife of my bosom, and my tender offspring, to the will of that beneficent being, who hath a sovereign right to dispose of me and mine, as he shall see most for his own glory.

My dear friends and fellow travellers, beware of immoderate care, for you may greatly injure, but never can you thereby profit your children at all. Think not that their settlement in the world depends either less or more upon you ; for when you have cared your last for them, the sovereign ruler will dispose of them just as he sees meet, without so much as once consulting you in the matter. Ah, my brethren, when you lye, as I do now, on a death-bed, you will see, that all immoderate carefulness springeth immediately from ignorance of and enmity against the ways of a holy God. Alas ! how many Christian people are woefully perplexed with fruitless care all the days of their life, and are thereby prevented of that usefulness which they might be of to the church of Christ ? Believe me the best thing you can do for you children, is solemnly and seriously to dedicate them unto God, leaving them and all their concerns with him. If you do this in good earnest, by an habitual act, both you and they will reap the advantage of it ; yours will be the peace, and theirs will be the profit. Remember what young *Samuel* got by his early dedication.

He ceased here, his strength being exhausted, and after some time one of his friends thus addressed him : Dear sir,
I cannot

I cannot persuade myself but a mind thus stayed on the Lord must be filled with the most joyous transport.

To which the good man replied, My mind is composed, and calmly fixed on the unalterable word of an ever-faithful God. My peace is settled, though my joys are far from being high. It is not on outward feelings that my hope is stayed, but on the promises of the everlasting covenant which are in Christ, yea and amen to every believer. Inward feelings are indeed extremely pleasant, but I have not dared for many years to trust them, for at best I have found them fleeting and transitory: now enjoyed; dead anon! now like the full-blown rose my comforts have flourished; immediately stripped of all their beauty like the winter vine. Whilst I lived upon my frames, I was all upon extremes, either ravished on the mount of enjoyment, or gone down to do business in the deep waters. One hour I said, *My mountain stands sure, I shall never be moved*: perhaps in less than another I supposed myself like *Peter*, sinking into the bosom of a fatal billow. No solidity could I ever find in the frames and dispositions of my own heart: but I never found the promise to fleet, nor the Lord to depart from the word he hath spoken. In all my trials his immutable word hath been my stay, and on it alone will I lean, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. And thus, in quietly resting on his word, he will finish the salvation of my soul.

INDEED, if the Lord should be pleased to indulge me now with the sensible comforts of his felt love, shed abroad in my heart by his holy Spirit, it would make this lonesome valley, into which I am entering, by far more delightful, and my passage through it abundantly less thorny. But if, in
his

his wisdom, he should see meet to with-hold from me such a desirable measure of sensible manifestation, I bless him for his unalterable word, and I bless him for strength to rely upon it.

My dear brethren, beware of making to yourselves a Christ of the dying comforts which your holy Redeemer is pleased occasionally to indulge you with. Remember that if his tender concern for your peace and pleasure induce him to privilege you with the sheddings abroad of his love in your heart, the same tenderness of you will induce him to withdraw his comforts from you when he sees himself supplanted, and you live upon those comforts rather than upon his person, grace, and righteousness. Remember always that salvation, and the comforts thereof, are two very different things; the fulness of the former being often possessed, where there is but a very small degree of the latter. In my early days of grace I was generally wont to frame to myself notions of the love of God to me, according to the glimmering twilight of my own mind, and the good or evil frame I found myself to be in; but through rich grace and amazing mercy I have been taught rather to judge thereof by the written word of God, by which I have been piloted through seas of difficulty, when darker sensations have lost sight of shore. And I trust the Holy Ghost will guide me by the said written word, till in his good time he is pleased to land me on the *glory-shore*, and bring me into the more immediate presence of the great Three-in-one.

THIS said, he remained silent for a considerable time, and the venerable *Veratio* turned himself to me, and thus accosted me. Now, *Novitio*, you behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. This is the good *Stabilus*, a Christian of the right kind; one who may be called a father
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in Israel; he can well distinguish between husk and kernel, shadow and substance, truth and error, a faithful one in the household of God. His holy soul can feed upon nothing but what is spiritual and divine; such bread, and such only, as descended from God out of heaven is pleasant to his taste. In his life-time, which hath been an uninterrupted succession of corroding sorrows, the good *Stabilus* could live as well and as satisfactorily upon a word of promise, as some others could do upon a hundred a year. Thus in his life-time he was so happy as to live by faith in the promises, and now he is a dying he is still the same. The word of the Lord is his comfort and stay. But although his unbelief appears to be banished from him, I can tell you it was not always so; for the time was, when under dark dispensations of Providence, he complained with Jacob that all those things were making against him, though now he is better informed. Yea, whatever infidelity we can find in Job, David, and Asaph, one part or other of the life of good *Stabilus* hath furnished him with a sad remembrance of theirs; though upon the whole his faith has prevailed gloriously, and I imagine that he will never more feel an impulse from unbelief.

Now, *Novitio*, I have a mind to unfold an amazing scene to you, such a scene as you have never before surveyed. Then he touched my eyes with an eye-salve of divine preparation, and instantly I saw what was extremely amazing; I saw a numerous troop of restless infernals beleaguering the bed of the sick man, which was well defended by a brilliant minister of heaven, divinely superb in his immaterial array; cloathed with impenetrable armour, the martial guardian waved a flaming sword, with which he kept all the Furies of the pit at a proper distance; so that although the most implacable hatred and rage glowed in every breast,

breast, they were not able to come near to disturb the mind of *Stabilus*. Sometimes they tipped their tongues with falsehood, and accused him of the most abominable crimes to the guardian, who with holy contempt disregarded all their clamours. Repulsed in this, they turn their accusings into the most fervent intreaties to the angel, that he would scabbard his sword for a season, and allow them the pleasure of distracting the dying man. But the benevolent protector, firm as a rock, remained inflexible to their intreaties, and deaf to their accusations, resolving, in obedience to the will of his God, to defend his charge to the last extremity. Being thus repulsed, even hell itself became hotter within them, and irritated with fierce revenge, they rush in fearful numbers against the heavenly centinel; and thick as atoms in the sun-beam, their hissing arrows were shot against him and his beloved charge; but skilled in martial encounters, he received their charge, and quenched their fiery darts with his shield, with which he also covered *Stabilus*; then with this brandished faulchion, which emitted streams of fire as he waved it, he made the infernal tribe to give back; but filled with indignation, and fired with revenge, they instantly rallied their broken force, and returned resolutely to the charge; and I had the pleasure of observing that as often as they rallied, the heavenly Chieftain put them to the flight. Being indulged with a view of this angelic war, I thought of an ancient saying, *The angel of the Lord encamps around those that fear him*; and turning to my guide, I said, O sir, it was well said of that Hebrew prince, who spent his youth in rural employments, *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance*. Ah sir, they are well kept whom the Lord doth keep, and the man is blessed whom he thus preserveth: to which *Veratio* replied, Now, *Novitia*, you have had

had a sight of faithful *Abdiel*, so justly celebrated by the famous *Milton*, for his constant and firm adherence to *Immanuel*, even when left alone in the camp of the rebellious seraphim. There it was,

“ That among the faithless, faithful only he ;
 “ Among innumerable false, unmov’d,
 “ Unshaken, unseduc’d, untterrify’d
 “ His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ;
 “ Nor number nor example with him wrought
 “ To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
 “ Though single. From amidst them forth he pass’d,
 “ Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain’d
 “ Superior nor of violence fear’d ought ;
 “ And with retorted scorn his back he turn’d
 “ On those proud tow’rs to swift destruction doom’d.”

THUS it was, *Novitio*, that this faithful guardian nobly retreated from the tents of rebellion, but ere long returns commissioned with the rest of the celestial hosts to fight with the perfidious miscreants in the quarrel of the most High ; and there he discovers at once his zeal for his God, and the prowess of his own martial arm : for when,

“ Before the cloudy van,
 “ On the rough edge of battle ere it join’d,
 “ Satan with vast and haughty strides advanc’d
 “ Came tow’ring, arm’d in adamant and gold ;
 “ *Abdiel* that fight endur’d not, where he stood
 “ Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds.
 “ But from his armed peers
 “ Forth stepping opposite, half-way he met

‘ His

" His daring foe, at this prevention more
 " Incens'd, and thus securely him defy'd.

" PROUD, art thou met? thy hope was to have reach'd
 " The height of thine aspiring unoppos'd,
 " The throne of God unguarded, and his side
 " Abandon'd at the terror of thy power
 " Or potent tongue :
 " - - - - - but thou see'st
 " All are not of thy train; there be who faith
 " Prefer, and piety to God, though then
 " To thee not visible, when I alone
 " Seem'd in thy world erroneous to dissent
 " From all; my sect thou see'st; now learn too late
 " How few sometimes may know, when thousands err."

Thus fervent *Abdiel* accosted the prince of rebels, when they met between the opposing fronts of the angelic armies on that awful day on which all the hosts of heaven and hell were drawn forth to battle on the, till then, unstained field of Æther. Then it was,

" That the grand foe, with scornful eye askance,
 " Thus answered the faithful *Abdiel*.
 " - - - - - Ill for thee, but in wish'd hour
 " Of my revenge, first sought, for thou return'st
 " From flight, seditious angel, to receive
 " Thy merited reward, the first assay
 " Of this right-hand provok'd, since first that tongue
 " Inspir'd with contradiction durst oppose
 " A third part of the Gods, in synod met
 " Their deities to assert.
 " - - - - - But well thou com'st

“ Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
 “ From me some plume, that thy success may show
 “ Destruction to the rest.

“ To whom in brief thus Abdiel stern reply'd.
 “ Apostate, still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
 “ Of erring, from the path of truth remote :
 “ Unjustly thou depriv'st it with the name
 “ Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
 “ Or nature ; God and nature bid the same,
 “ When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
 “ Them whom he governs.
 “ Reign thou in hell, thy kingdom ; let me serve
 “ In heav'n God ever blest, and his divine
 “ Behests obey, worthiest to be obey'd ;
 “ Yet chains in hell, not realms expect : mean while
 “ From me return'd, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
 “ This greeting on thy impious crest receive.

“ So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
 “ Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
 “ On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
 “ Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield
 “ Such ruin intercept : ten paces huge
 “ He back recoil'd ; the tenth on bended knee
 “ His massy spear upstay'd.”

THUS, according to the matchless Milton, the faithful Abdiel first asserted the sovereign right of his God, both by word and deed ; and thus he hath continued an invincible hero in the cause of his master, and a willing and faithful guardian of his militant children, as you have just now seen in the conflict betwixt him and the infernal brotherhood.

I THOUGHT

I THOUGHT in my dream that I thus replied: I thank you most heartily, my dear, my venerable *Veratio*, for this discovery, so strange and surprising in itself; and I thank you most gratefully, dear sir, for this opportunity of seeing the valour of this celebrated angel. But worthy *Veratio*, whose delight appears to be to instruct the ignorant, I pray you deign to inform me, if it is possible that such a war may be maintained around a Christian, and the party himself, for whom the strife is, remain unacquainted with it? To which I thought he replied: You may be at no loss, *Novitio*, to know that the best of Christians, even fathers in the Redeemer's family, see and know only in part, therefore there may be many things of this kind transacted among the immaterial inhabitants of the spiritual world without their knowledge. Every Christian may certainly be informed by the volume of revelation in general, that all the angels of God are *ministering spirits*, sent forth to minister unto those who are appointed heirs of salvation; nevertheless there are many offices of kindness performed by those benevolent spirits in the behalf of the saints, which the most intelligent Christians remain utterly ignorant of whilst they sojourn in this land of separation and sorrow. As we may see in the case of good *Stabilus*, he perfectly knows that God is the prime efficient of all his peace and composure of mind; but he doth not know that there is a martial seraph appointed by the sovereign of heaven as the guardian of his bed, and protector of his dying moments; nor is he in the least apprehensive that there is such a swarm of reprobate spirits so near, and so earnestly seeking the distraction of his mind.

IF the militant members of the chosen church could really see their shining attendants, and understand all the ways

of the Lord perfectly, they would enjoy the heavenly glories before the appointed time : but the fulness of joy, and the manifest glories of the redeemed are reserved for eternity, therefore not to be expected in time : on this account many of the Lord's works are done in the dark, and his ways are involved in thick clouds ; so that poor purblind mortals cannot discern them before they enjoy the light of eternity. And you yourself, *Novitio*, may know that the conflicts betwixt our benevolent protectors the guardian angels, and our enemies of the reprobate race, are not to be seen with bodily eyes, but with the more refined rays of the mind. Bodily eyes may discern corporeal objects, but spiritual sight alone can discern spirit.

I THOUGHT in my dream, that towards the dissolution of *Stabilius*, I beheld a squadron of armed seraphs, who were dispatched from the armies in the skies to assist *Abdiel* in the protection of this chosen disciple ; who as soon as arrived, and fraternal salutation passed after the angelic manner, they told him that *Jehovah* having, from the throne of his holiness, seen that great numbers of the enemies had assaulted him and his charge, had sent them to his assistance. And *Abdiel* thus replied : Welcome, my spotless brethren ; welcome are ye now to me, for I have been vigorously attacked, and still the daring infernals are resolute ; but through the strength of my God I have preserved my charge inviolate. Come, my brethren, let us prepare for immediate action, for the enemies, though frequently repulsed, being now afresh recruited from hell, are rallying their utmost force, and soon will return intrepidly to the charge. This said, I perceived that those ever-armed seraphs each of them drew his flaming sword, fixed his shield, and planted themselves around the bed of the good *Stabilius*, every hero putting himself

himself in a posture of defence, saying with united voice, *It is the good will of our Lord that his chosen ones should be preserved.* Happy man, said I, who art thus defended! I thought in my dream, that after all this was done, the good *Stabilus*, as if he had received fresh vigour at the arrival of his celestial visitants, opened his mouth, and most fervently expressed himself in the following manner: I know that he is God, and that he is my God. He hath guided me from my conception to this my dying day; all his judgments towards me have been mingled with mercy, and holy and reverend is his name; all his mercies have been mixed less or more with judgment. I will therefore, with the royal Hebrew, sing of mercy and of judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. A chain of well-concerted and blessed providences laid hold of me at my conception, and till now hath led me in such a manner, that all hath been for good; and now, my friends, it is with amazement I see both the ends of the chain unalterably fixed in the eternal throne. It cometh from and centereth in the Father's everlasting love to me, in the person of Jesus, unworthy as I am; and O! let God, even God in the person of the Redeemer, be praised, be owned and glorified with my last, my departing breath. Hear me, my fellow Christians, for I speak now within the immediate views of eternity, and DEATH even now oppresseth my weary lungs. Behold, *I go the way of all living: but I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and although after my skin worms destroy, as they certainly will, this body of mine, yet in the flesh, even in this flesh, now almost consumed, I shall see God, yea I shall see him for myself, and not for another; not at a distance, but near, though my reins be consumed within me. I shall see him on that momentous and much-desired day on which I shall, in my whole person, be*

made like unto him. These words were expressed even in the arms of DEATH, so that he was quite spent with speaking, and lay in a profound silence for a minute or two, then in a holy triumph, with a countenance that displayed a sense of conquest, he said, *Lord Jesus, come quickly; into thy hands I commend my spirit.* These were his last words, and a few minutes after he quietly yielded up the ghost, and slept in Jesus.

IN the mean while *Veratio* addressed himself to me as follows: This, *Novitio*, is Christian fortitude, distinct from the ancient pagan bravery of the Romans. If you see a Brutus or Cassius, or even a Cato himself, out-brave the fears of DEATH, it is from a principle of ignorance of the real nature and state of an HEREAFTER: but it is the clear knowledge of eternity, and of the perfections of God, which fortifies the mind of *Stabilus* against every painful apprehension, now he is making his *exit* from the stage of time, and is struggling hand to hand with the quencher of the animal flame.

MIND the tender *Honora*; mark how she stands with a mournful pleasure by the bed of her dying partner, hers but a very few moments longer. Two things oppress her with sensible concern, and two things inspire her labouring bosom with holy joy. She is most sensible of the awful dispensation which lays her under a multiplicity of cares; and O! her dear, her much esteemed *Stabilus*, the pain which he endures in his departing moments becomes hers by sympathy. As she supports his head, and tenderly wipes the cold sweat from his brow, every sigh of his, every symptom of pain, cuts its way directly through her sympathetic heart; she dreads the parting with him, yet longs for the dissolving moment.

moment. Souls thus knit by holy matrimony, and thus made one by sympathy, feel on such cases such rending and tearing of the sensitive faculties, which neither the tongue nor pen can describe. But in the midst of her sorrow two things support the amiable *Honora*, namely, the consideration that these departing agonies put a period to every grief, a final period to every sorrow of her dear, her much valued husband. And she hopes, upon solid and scriptural grounds she hopes, that in a little time she herself will be in mercy taken to the celestial world, where she shall again receive with unspeakable joy the pure and spiritual caresses of her glorified husband, where they shall spend a vast and endless eternity together, in the transporting pleasures of paradise, and mutually join in celebrating the praises of their common God and Saviour. Thus she mourns, and reason says she should; but religion teaches her to mourn as one that is not without hope.

THE dissolving moment come the watchful infernals took wing and fled, leaving the soul for ever to the blessed possession of uninterrupted peace; she ascending triumphant, and wrapt in extatic wonder, sat for a season on the clayey lips of her beloved mate, and shone more gloriously than all her attendants, who, free from envy, joyfully saluted her with *Peace be unto thee*, and fondly congratulated her on her safe arrival on the confines of eternity.

By this time I thought I saw an innumerable company of the seraphic *flames*, all of them shining in the perfection of glory, who as the former came at the will of Immanuel to congratulate her soul on her safe passage through the wilderness of tears, and the gloomy valley of the shadow of DEATH, and her safe arrival in Immanuel's country, then gave her

their united welcome into their resplendent society. I cannot now, ah ! I cannot describe the joys of the glory-born soul, when she first perceived herself invested with the radiance of heaven, and sensibly prest to the fervent bosom of everlasting love, for her admiration was inexpressible. But my benevolent guide, the good *Veratio*, now becoming an interpreter, with no small difficulty I gathered up some few of her rapturous expressions, which but for his assistance I could not have done; for she spoke in the celestial tongue, which is a language that I never had learned; and so imperfect is the fragment which I collected when compared with the original, that I redden with shame, and my heart flutters with fear to expose it to view, lest I should thereby injure the subject, and eclipse the glory which I would gladly (the Lord knows) recommend to human esteem. But encouraged by the confession of the incomparable Paul, *here we see darkly and but in part*, I will venture to write it, though it is as it were with fear and trembling.

No sooner was the happy soul disentangled from mortality, but she was filled with the fulness of the glory of God, and in the highest elevation of transport, cried out with a voice of the most perfect melody.

Is this the resting-place, to which we weary pilgrims are brought after a moment's trouble below? Glorious rest ! I have often heard, I have often longed for the possession of thee when tossed with the tempest of life: Happy I ! Blessed peace ! Uninterrupted joy and permanent rest ! Hallelujah ! Let all the empyrean hosts, let all the militant church incessantly praise in the highest strain, the eternal and bounteous Provider of this glorious rest, in which all our labour and sorrow shall eternally cease ! Is this the heaven I have so often
heard

heard preached ? This glorious place ! O heaven ! How often have I heard of thy divine excellencies when sojourning in the world below ? But now I behold thy refulgent glories without an interposing cloud, and lo ! the thousandth part of thy beauties was never disclosed. Happy are thine inhabitants, thou imperial city, for the great King is in the midst of thee ; his uncreated glories irradiate every corner of thy blissful streets. Blest and un sullied mansions of the disembodied spirits of the just ! Happy I, who was predestinated to the possession of this divine inheritance ! Is this the Saviour whom I formerly denied ? Ever, till the day of unfrustrable grace, did I say unto thee, thou adorable Lord, I will not have *thee* to reign over me. But, O my Lord, am I now at last blest with the immediate vision of thee ? Thou Sharon rose divine ! Thy beauties, Lord, how amiable ! O how transcendently great are thine excellent glories ! Eternal and all-conquering Saviour, I am now at last ravished with thy super-abundant goodness, which on earth I could scarcely with coolness admire, but now I behold thee to be all excellent and divine. Is this the *crown* ? The end of all my former crosses ? Massy treasure ! glorious lustre ! How striking is the stupendous blaze ! In the world below my eyes were dreadfully obscure, but now I behold all the excellencies of Godhead. All the radiant beams of unclouded divinity in their fullest resplendency shining forth in thine immaculate person. Thou adorable Jesus ! Blessed thou ! happy I ! Blessed afflictions, which in thy all-powerful hand thou eternal Spirit, have fitted me for those unsulliable mansions of uninterrupted felicity !

SIN and DEATH where are ye now ? Trampled for ever beneath my victorious feet. Adorable Saviour, the conquest is thine. Ye tempting fiends, the promised time is now commenced

commenced that I scorn for ever your envious rage. No more, ye malignant infernals, shall your cruel buffetings be able to shake the tranquillity of this ever peaceful and glorified mind. Nor shall your spear-like tongues, ye sons of violence and deceit, evermore be able to tarnish my conduct with blame. Ye childrean of perfidy, ye treacherous persecutors of the gracious church, the gulph is fixed, and here you can never come a second time to perplex me with sorrow; nor shall the tumultuous rage of fiery lusts and impetuous passions ever more be able to separate betwixt my best beloved and me.

I AM now secure within thine insurmountable walls, O thou blessed Jerusalem ! Overwhelmed with the insupportable blaze of delighted divinity, here let me bask for ever, though the bliss is insufferable. Already filled with the fulness of manifest and imparted love, let me drink for ever at the fountain of life. Ever, for ever, my God, will I praise thee ; incessantly praise thee whilst eternity endures. Grace and providence, providence and grace, shall fill up the measure of mine eternally delightful song. This is my employment ; this is the task prescribed by the sweet obligations of gratitude.

HAVING gathered up this most imperfect fragment of what I heard, I thought that the scene was drawn, and the vision departed from me ; and I, astonished at what I had heard and seen, turned to my guide, and in transport said : No wonder, sir, if Balaam, who saw the visions of the Almighty, desired to die the death of the righteous, and enjoy such a latter end as theirs. No wonder if Judas the traitor despaired and hanged himself, after having betrayed such a glorious Saviour as this. Ah, *Veratio*, my good *Veratio*,
may

may I enjoy the divine favour whatever else I may lack ! May I endure all sorrow which both earth and hell can inflict, rather than miss of the glory which shall be revealed ! Fall short of heaven ! O ! I tremble at the thought ! Fall short of heaven ! If I should, I should be of all creatures the most emphatically wretched and miserable. To love, to see, and not enjoy, ah what intolerable anguish would it give ! If it depended less or more on works of my performing, I could not avoid falling short. But it is of grace, all of grace, of nothing but grace, and so let grace have the glory for ever secure. O let me not deceive myself in a matter of such grand importance ; but, raw and unexperienced as I am, I think I have something of the same hope which the good *Stabilus* expressed ; and O, *Veratio*, may my latter end be like his !

HERE my guide addressed me, and said, Now, *Novitio*, you have seen something of DEATH transformed into life, and it is glorious in your esteem ; but if you will follow me, we may yet make farther discoveries relating to the departure of the sanctified. By this time my curiosity was stretched to the utmost pitch, therefore I needed but little persuasion to attend to farther discoveries, seeing the departure of *Humilius* and of *Stabilus* was so very agreeable, at least to myself ; therefore I said to my guide, lead, *Veratio*, lead wherever you will, and I will follow you.

ARE you sure of that ? replied *Veratio* ; perhaps you may be mistaken ; a much stronger person than *Novitio* appears to be hath deserted me before now, and the strongest have found it difficult enough to adhere to me at certain times. Pardon me, sir, replied I, I meant whilst you unfold such agreeable scenes ; for I perceive, sir, their influence is attractive.

tractive. Well, *Novitio*, replied he, I agree with you in that, for when you are strongly drawn, I do not doubt but you will run apace. However at present let us attend to the matter in hand.

ACCORDINGLY he led me away from this to another, but mean apartment, and as we entered he said, Now, *Novitio*, prepare yourself for seeing the wondrous works of the Almighty. I admired what miracle I was now to behold, but ere long I beheld a miracle of grace; a poor woman and three small children were the humble inhabitants of this despicable hut; and, as I learned from my guide, the poor but tender mother, whose name was *Fidelia*, had been confined to her bed by a deathly disorder for the space of six weeks or upwards, and by this time she seemed almost conquered by the fatal enemy to nature, though she still retained the perfect use of her reason, and still was capable of speaking to her visitants. At the time of our going into her mean apartment, some few of her friendly acquaintance, some of them meanly, others of them better attired, were come to visit her, desirous to perform the best offices of Christian friendship, expecting that her departure from earth was at hand, one of whom who stood by her bed-side spoke to her thus : My dear friend, *Fidelia*, I see your body is very low, and in all appearance the hour of your departure is approaching near, but if strength will permit I should be glad to know how it is with you in your soul ; for I have sometimes known the soul to be most healthful and vigorous, when the outward man has been in the very arms of DEATH. To whom I thought *Fidelia* replied : O my friend ! we have a kind and compassionate Lord ; his comforts to me, a poor unworthy creature, are neither few nor small. I may well say he feedeth me with his grace, and
all

all his paths drop fatness to me. O my friends ! my root is in the best soil, and the dew lies all night upon my branches. O let me ever be thankful for that sweet and transporting day on which I found freedom of soul to rely upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is held forth in the gospel ! Blessed be God for freedom to call the Redeemer my own, and to look on him in an appropriating way ! O the sweetness of the remembrance of it ! It weighs me down with the delightful weight of humbling love ; electing, redeeming, and regenerating love commended itself by the sweetest and most persuasive eloquence unto my heart, and still it is the more endearing, because of its discriminating nature. O it is unspeakable ! O the heights and depths ! O divine love ! Why is it that I, a poor unworthy hell-deserving sinner, should be found thy favoured object ? Amazing and miraculous grace ! that ever the great salvation of the adorable Jesus hath laid hold on me, and preached itself into my very heart although I am the basest of all the human creation : behold I see the wise, the moral, the rich, and the noble, standing at a distance from the great salvation, and strangers to the pardoning mercy of God, whilst I, the most unworthy of all, am fed with the comforts of his love. It is thy doing, O thou omnipotent Saviour, and it is marvellous in my eyes ! Thou lovest merely because thou wilt love, and parest only because it is thy pleasure so to do.

AFTER some time her friend addressed himself to her as follows ; I perceive, *Fidelia*, and I am glad to see it, that you do not quarrel with the providence of God, because he hath given you but a scanty measure of worldly substance ; you seem as not offended because you are poor, and have not fortunes to leave your children.

No,

No, my friend, replied she, I am not angry, for the Lord doth all things well, and my lot hath been just and rightly determined; I would not on any account that it had been any other than it has been. Whatever beauty others may think there is in growing riches, I must tell you for my own part, that I would not for the world I had been born to be rich, for wherever they come, *riches are sure to be a burden to the possessor*; therefore, he who well understood the nature of things, says, *he that increaseth in them, doth also increase in sorrow*. And I have always found my own corruptions to be burden enough for me to bear up the hill towards mount Zion, without a weight of thick clay, however brilliant, on my shoulders.

HERE my guide gently jogged me, and said, This is most excellently judged of *Fidelia*, for as weights of lead are to the courser, when he runs for the plate, *so is gold to the follower of Christ*. It is very difficult to possess gold without loving of it, and you may know *that the love of money is the root of all evil*; inasmuch that it is next to impossible for a rich man to be a true and humble Christian.

IN the mean while, *Fidelia* continued, and said, Had I been full, I might with many others have forgot my God; but my narrow circumstances have furnished me with many precious opportunities of beholding the goodness of his providence; which opportunities I had certainly otherwise lost. I think I see such a beauty in the unerring dispensations of providence towards me, that no way so suitable could have been chosen, as the very way which my gracious God hath taken to bring me to himself and his glory. Well may I cry out with the apostle, *O the riches both of his wisdom and knowledge!*

FILLED

FILLED with admiration at the goodness of God, *Fidelia* stopped here, and *Veratio* said to me, It has been, *Novitio*, the error of many writers, and still more of readers, to suppose, that small entertainment, and but few profitable hints, are to be drawn from a state of low life; but if we will make true religion our theme, where must we go to find it? If we enquire at the palace of *Elatus*, there we see all the pomp of magnificent pride driving on in its lofty career; or if we call at the seat of *Ganiëo*, we are immediately confronted by drunkenness and revelling, and the delicate board, though covered with the most tasteful viands, is altogether destitute of that religion which would prevent it becoming a snare to the owner. It is much more likely, that if in quest of real religion you will find her with wretched Lazarous at the gate, rather than within the hotel of Dives: for not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble, are called to the possession of true religion, but the poor have the gospel preached to them; and amongst the lower class of the people religion dwells in its greatest power, as you may see in the case of *Fidelia*, whose mind is overwhelmed with holy joy, even in the midst of her extreme sufferings.

It was now, I thought, that one of her friends asked her how it was with her, as to the comforts of life? To which she replied, O my friends, I have all things and abound: our gracious God hath promised, that our bread shall be given and our water shall be sure; and to the praise of his providence I can say, that I have always found the promise verified, for he is a God keeping covenant, and full of faithfulness; this I have always had reason to note, but more especially have I been sensible of it since the death of my dear *Fidelio*; since then I have been necessitated to live by faith on the promises of a provident God. I
have

have been enabled to trust therein, and never knew the promises to fail, nor the Lord to fall short of any word he hath spoken. How shall I praise thee, thou God of infinite fulness, who from thine own inexhaustible stores hast richly supplied all my wants ! I long to appear before thee, O thou immaculate Redeemer, that I may see thee in the effulgence of thy glory, for here I see darkly as in a glass. Many are the refreshing gales of sweet consolation which I have had in the ordinances of thy grace : but now, when I compare them with that unfathomable depth of undecaying comfort which I see immediately before me, they are like the small dust of the balance when compared to the world, or like to the drop of water which hangs at the bucket when compared to the vast ocean. O the divine blaze of heavenly glory, which already begins to beam upon my soul, even on this wilderness-side of Jordan ! O thou new and heavenly Jerusalem, I am already overcome with thine excellent beauties ! O what must it be when put in the full possession ! And, even now, nothing hinders me from feeding on the fattest of thy comforts, but this thin and almost rent vail of mortality. Let it once be rent, as it soon will, and I shall with unspeakable joy sustain all the stupendous blaze of thy unfulfilled glories.

I LONG, O ! I long to join yonder glorious throng, yonder radiant church in the realms above. I long to press into yonder bright assembly which, by faith, I see surrounding the eternal throne, that I might mingle my humble notes with their harmonious voices, and with them sing the praise of God and of the Lamb. Hasten thy pace, O ever-tardy time ! Ye moments swiftly end your destined flight. Lord, shake my glass, that the sands may speedily pass through. But I see, holy and reverend is his name, that
there

there remains but a few particles more in the life-end of my glass, and they will speedily be down, then face to face I shall see the glorious object of my supreme delight, and for ever offer up perfect adoration to him that loved me, and washed me in his blood. With unspeakable delight I shall behold that glorious face which once was marred with *shame and spitting*. I shall behold him for myself, and not for another. These eyes, which have so often turned aside after vanity, these very eyes, shall in transport gaze on the King in his beauty; this tongue shall delight to praise him eternity along; and these hands, which once were the instruments of unrighteousness, shall throw at his majestic feet the glorious crown wherewith this worthless head shall soon be adorned. O happy, happy day, that brings home the longing exile, and lands the weary pilgrim upon the shore of rest, to be ever, ever with the Lord !

FIDELIA finishing here, her friend again said to her ; My dear sister, I rejoice with you that the Lord is pleased to indulge you with such a measure of his sensible presence, on this which otherwise would be a day of severe trial to you ; but the Redeemer's presence makes even DEATH itself not only tolerable, but desirable and easy. But in the midst of your sensible enjoyments, you seem as if you had forgot your three little children : tell me, *Fidelia*, have you no uneasiness at the thoughts of leaving them behind you in a land of sin and sorrow ? Would it not, with submission to the divine will, be desirable to you to be spared to see them brought up to a capacity of doing for themselves ?

To whom *Fidelia* replied : The Lord hath been a husband to the widow, and I am persuaded he will be a father to the fatherless, and an all-sufficient stay to the helpless orphan.

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My children are dear, but my Saviour is infinitely dearer to me, and I have got such a taste of the grapes of the heavenly Canaan, that I cannot think of abiding longer on this wilderness-side of DEATH. My heart is already gone over, O why do I tarry any longer behind! but the Lord's time is the best. Pray for me, my friends, that I may not offend the best of beings by my impatience to be gone, but submissively wait for the dissolving moment. Then her friend tenderly rejoined: But have your companions in warfare no weight at all upon your mind? Can you with pleasure leave them in this inhospitable world? Then she replied: Alas! my friend, of what service can my presence be to a warfaring church? I can be of no service at all. But I know that he who hath chosen, purchased, and sanctified it, will safely keep it, and every individual member of it, to the perfect day: for of all whom the Father hath given to the Mediator, he hath not lost, he will not lose any thing; no, not the weakest, or the most contemptible; for all, all shall be gathered safe the glory-fold.

BUT give the immortal love of a dying woman to our fellow-church-members, and tell them from me, that it is the last request of their dying friend, that they live at a greater distance from the world. There is, alas! too much, by far too much likeness betwixt the precious children of God and the children of the world. Some of them, in a manner very unbecoming them, court the fantastical honours, and others seem too eagerly to thirst after the perishing and unsatisfactory riches, of this transitory and delusive world, which, if they could obtain, would all *lose their beauty on a dying day*. And others of our friends there are, who but too, too much delight in the vain and empty pleasures of the flesh, which at best are no more than an areal dream.

But

But O! tell them from me, that the honours of life are lighter than chaff, and will all be driven away by the breath of Jehovah's fan, when he comes to purge his floor; then, my friends, they will appear lighter than nothing, and altogether vanity. O that they could be persuaded that gold and silver is one of the most dangerous burdens that a Christian possibly can carry: the love of money is the root of all evil. They will never repent when they come to a death-bed, that they are not rich and cannot leave fortunes for their children. Tell them, that if the Almighty, in his wisdom, sees that riches are for their good, he will, in his benevolence, bestow them without their immoderate care, or without injuring their minds in the least. O let Christians beware of accounting gain to be godliness. Tell them from me, that the pursuit of worldly pleasure is the certain way to dishonour their God, and destroy the peace of their own souls. O persuade them, as Christians, to seek the things which come from above, where the blessed Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God. Let them know, that conformity to the customs of the world is highly injurious to the cause and interest of Christ, and has a natural tendency to harden poor sinners in their rebellion against God. When they come to a death-bed, as I am now, all those names of honour, the esteem of mankind, and all the comfort which springs from the possession of riches, will vanish away as empty vapours and smoke. Verily, all things here below are vanity. The divine religion of the ever-loving and ever-lovely Jesus, is the one thing needful; the only thing that will yield satisfaction on a dying day.

FIDELIA having exhausted her strength, remained a considerable time silent, and *Veratio* turned himself toward, and addressed me as follows.

KNOW, *Novitio*, that *Fidelia* was daughter to a worthy tradesman named *Philaethes*, one who was a constant lover, and a punctual observer of truth, as all that dealt with him would readily testify. *Philaethes* was parent to a numerous offspring, whom he carefully instructed in the principles of religion. As soon as his tender infants began to lisp forth their innocent and child-like prattlings, he used to deal with them as rational creatures, and studied to impress their minds with a sense of the greatness and omnipresence of God, and particularly of the purity of his nature, and his utter aversion to sin. It was his constant custom to maintain regularly at a certain hour twice a day the worship of God in his family, at which he took care that no business, however urgent, should hinder the attendance of either children or servants, accounting it his honour, as he found it his pleasure, to go before his family in the worship of God; and well knowing, that the Almighty delighteth more in the gates of Zion than in all the dwellings of Jacob, he carefully led his whole family duly to attend the public worship of God, during which he accustomed his children from their youngest years to a decent and becoming gravity in the house of prayer; and as he suffered no part of the holy sabbath to be devoted to vain amusements or worldly business, the morning thereof was chiefly employed in divine worship, and in putting his family in mind of the solemnity of the sanctuary service which they were to enter upon; and in the evening his care was to improve the sermons which they had heard, and administer suitable instructions to the various branches of his family, according to their several capacities. But well knowing that human endeavours avail but little without the divine blessing, he was a fervent wrestler * with God for the

* Gen. xxxii. 24.

bleſſing, and had the pleaſure of ſeeing that his endeavours and prayers were not in vain, as his family, even from their younger years, were probably reſtrained from the fashionable vices which corrupt our youth, and were perfect ſtrangers to the brilliance of a ball, and the irreligious entertainment of a theatre. In the diſpoſal of his children in marriage he was not ſo careful about worldly advantages as he was ſtrictly nice in his enquiries, whether there was a likenefs in their natural diſpoſition, the viſible appearance of real grace in the ſoul, and a harmony in their religious ſentiments; well knowing that unleſs a huſband and wife are of the ſame opinion, both with regard to doctrine and manner of worſhip, there is but little proſpect of that union which is ſo eſſential to mutual happineſs. *Fidelia* he married to a worthy young man, of but a ſmall fortune, whoſe name was *Fidelio*, a mechanical tradesman, who in their younger years ſuſtained ſuch loſſes in trade, as reduced him to the neceſſity of ſupporting his family by the labour of his hands; and no labour he thought too hard to ſupport his wife and children whom he ſo tenderly loved. But as one ſays in a certain place, it ſometimes happens to a righteous perſon according to the deſert of the wicked; ſo it happened to *Fidelia*, for it pleaſed the Lord a few years ſince to take her huſband away at a very ſhort notice, from her head, to poſſeſs the heavenly diadem to which he was appointed. Her fervent and faithful friend, her diligent provider being gone, ſhe found herſelf in a melancholy ſituation, left in an inhospitable world with three tender and beloved infants, one of whom was but juſt weaned from the breaſt. But her God, her faithful God, was the object of her truſt; ſhe ſenſibly felt the ſtroke, and was humbled under the afflicting diſpenſation; but never, never was the grieved *Fidelia* heard to allege that the almighty Diſpoſer dealt hardly with her. Never was ſhe known in a way of
murmuring

murmuring and impatience to say unto God, *What dost thou?*

ON the other hand, she was careful to know whether she had not purchased the affliction to herself by an over-estimate for, and to much dependence on, her husband; thereby withholding a part of her heart from, and infringing her duty of full dependence on God. In the times of her deepest distress she was wont thus to reason: I know, yea I am fully persuaded, that the Lord afflicteth not willingly; there must be a *need be* before he is pleased to apply the rod. Instead of mourning as one without hope, her principal care was that the dispensation might be sanctified to her advantage and growth in grace, that she might live more upon, and rest more fully in, the Saviour who died for her. *Fidelia* was a woman who knew well how to plead a promise in the time of need; she was always but weak in body, but a powerful wrestler at the throne of grace; she was shy in courting, and modest in receiving favours from man, but at the throne of God she was importunate and would not take a denial. Her circumstances being very low after the death of her husband, she was brought to the necessity of living by faith in a promising God, even for hers and her childrens daily sustenance, which I assure you is far from being the easiest part of the exercise of faith.

DISTRESS Fidelia is used to comfort herself in reflecting upon the regard which Jehovah has expressed towards the poor and needy, and especially his declaring of himself “to be a husband to the widow, a father to the fatherless, and a stay to the helpless orphan;” and thus she is wont to reflect within herself, “The glorious God, who hath seen it meet to take away my husband, hath graciously promised to be a husband to me himself; and if he will
be

Be a husband to me, as he hath said, he will surely act the part of the best of husbands. The husband's part is to direct, defend, and provide for his spouse, and all this the Lord hath promised he will do for the widow who trusts in him. This is agreeable to the tenor of the promises in general, and in particular to that saluary word on which he hath caused me to hope, where he hath declared himself a *sun* and a *shield* to his people. Here is *light* to lead and direct, here is *heat* to influence and quicken me in all my languor, and here is a *shield* for safety, a *shield* of protection from all enemies outward and inward; he addeth, I will give *grace* to support under, and to sanctify afflictions; and, when the work is finished, he says, I will give *glory*. This life is indeed a life of infinite wants, but here is provision made against them all; for it is added, *I will withhold no good thing*. This is an ample provision made for all my necessities. Great as they are, the grace of the promise is infinitely greater. Here is consolatory supply for the most desolate widow. I will therefore trust in the Lord, and not be afraid; and, so trusting, I shall never be confounded, nor shall my hope be put to shame. This is the ground of all my confidence, he encourages the boldness of the weak, the poor, and needy; but abhorreth the timidity of the unbelieving. None are ever condemned for trusting in the Lord with a holy boldness, in proportion to their necessities; my necessities are great, therefore, O Lord, may my trust in Thee be strong."—It was thus she was wont to commune with her own heart in profitable reflections upon the promises of God. She was likewise accustomed early to tell her children, that now they had no natural father to provide for and dispose of them; but that God had declared himself *the Father of the fatherless*, and she hoped that He would be a father to them. Earnestly did she recommend them

to the grace and protection of the divine Shepherd, who bears the lambs on his arm, and nourisheth them in his bosom. She prayed, and she hoped that God would be the guardian of their infant years, and train them up in his own fear, nurture, and admonition, provide for them things necessary, and dispose of them to the glory both of his providence and grace. Thus her daily prayers were unto the Lord, and all her *cares* were committed unto him; nothing doubting, but in the unbounded beneficence of his nature he would take special care both of her and her's.

THUS she lived in a constant reliance on the providence and promises of God, and was never disappointed, notwithstanding her faith was frequently tried as with fire; and now she is a dying, could I paint to you the holy joys of her elevated soul, if you were possesst of all the wealth of the Indies, *Novitio*, you would willingly part with it, if it were possible that you could exchange your condition for such as her's. An explicit narration of *Fidelia's* experience would be of more use to the church of Christ, than the voluminous elaborate works of many a learned doctor, who hath not had the same experience; for there hath been more religion in one week of her life, than in thirty years preaching of some who are called masters in Israel. And now, *Novitio*, that you may know that God is not ashamed of the meanest of his saints, I have a mind once more to give you a view of the immaterial world; thereby you will see that the angels of God do not despise her because of her poverty.

THIS said, he again in his usual manner so strengthened my visual ray, that instantly I saw that the place was filled with the heavenly hosts, who unweariedly ministred to the
dying

dying woman ; and she, notwithstanding in the embraces of DEATH, was so transported with holy joy, that she forgot the pains of dying. So fervently glowed the seraphic flame in her heart, and in such profusion the joys of approaching eternity were poured into her soul, that all sensation of pain seemed to be gone. By this time the lamp of nature only glimmering in the socket, she lay supinely stretched on her bed, longing and waiting for the dissolving moment ; and so long as her voice continued articulate she dispensed instructions to her friends, adoring the riches of electing, redeeming, and regenerating love. At last, perceiving that nature's sparks were almost quite extinguished, with eyes sublimely elevated, and holy triumph smiling on her countenance, with a voice which could scarcely be heard, she said, ' Come, Father, come ; Thou knowest I am waiting thy command.' And in a few moments after she quietly departed, and her glorified soul joined in fellowship with the ministers of heaven, formerly her invisible attendants ; and now, swift as thought, they carry her to the blissful regions of eternal day : there she was received with joyful acclamations by all the hosts of the heaven of heavens ; and the ever-adorable Redeemer pronounced her blessed, saying, " Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, therefore thou shalt be ruler over many." On which I thought she was crowned with immortality, and invested with all the royalties of glory. As I was gazing on the unutterable glories of the heavenly world, my beloved sleep departed from me, the unwelcome morning rushed in upon me, and bereaved me of the sweet delights I had enjoyed in the night.

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